

Max Horkheimer's Early Views of the German Working Class

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1. Introduction

The limited scope of this investigation (restricted to a few sources in English) is to construct Max Horkheimer's (1895–1973) early views from *c.* 1912 to January 1931 about the German workers.¹ His views about the worsening conditions of the workers remained intact throughout his whole life.

For our purposes the following are considered the most important writings:

- *From Puberty*. This is a post-humus publication of Horkheimer's collection of dramas, novellas and journal entries that covers the period until he returned from World War I shortly before its end.
- Letters by Horkheimer to various people up to end-January 1931.
- *Dawn & Decline* (1926 to 1931 which includes 'The Impotence of the German Working Class' that written in 1927).
- 'The Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History' written in 1930.
- 'New Concept of Ideology?' written in 1930.
- 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research' delivered on 24 January 1931.

Contemporary interest in 'Horkheimer's thought is of more than mere antiquarian interest'.² Similarly, John Abromeit recently argued compellingly for the continued study of Horkheimer and early Critical Theory – arguments that, in my view, continue to carry weight today.³ Most intellectual fields of social

¹ On 24 January 1931, Horkheimer delivered his inaugural lecture on the official acceptance of the position as

director of the Institute for Social Research, at the University of Frankfurt am Main.

² Schnädelbach, H. 'Max Horkheimer and the Moral Philosophy of German Idealism', in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß

and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.282.

³ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*.

inquiry are today characterized by the influence in one form or another of Critical Theory.

Abromeit's recent research, and that of for instance Martin Jay,⁴ Rolf Wiggerhaus,⁵ Peter Stirk⁶ and other researchers (included in this bibliography) form the basis for this article because of their pertinent contributions pertaining to the understanding of Critical Theory and (for this study), because of Horkheimer's influence as a prominent first generation philosopher. In a sense, there will be some overlap regarding the bigger story of the Institute's first decade, but with efforts herein to limit such. The thinking behind this article forms part of a larger project viz. the hypothetical consideration of *history as critical social theory*.

The provisional working hypothesis in this article remains as follows: Horkheimer's views of the German workers gradually developed to culminate in 'The Impotence of the German Working Class' in *Dawn & Decline*. From those, we can formulate an explanatory model of his early views that cover this period. The background to these formulations of Horkheimer's was the failed Weimar republic revolution (1918/19) and the relative powerlessness of the post-1918 German working class. From a bourgeois perspective, the working class was considered an antagonistic totality - from the position of the working class however, and as subjects to a capitalist environment, they continued to endure a 'sense of alienatedness and in-authenticity of life in bourgeois-capitalist society'.⁷ Horkheimer then continued to use this scenario during the rest of his writing career.

The plan of this article is as follows. The next section intends to show the foundations of Horkheimer's early perceptions of the material world he found himself, the conditions that had become the object of his critique, but also the building blocks for his later intellectual development. Section three dealt with the various instruments employed in society to bring about and perpetuate the

⁴ Jay, M. *The Dialectical Imagination. A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950*.

⁵ Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*. (Translated by M. Robertson).

⁶ Stirk, P.M.R. *Max Horkheimer: A New Interpretation*.

⁷ Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, p.4.

manifestations of societal domination. In order to place such and subsequent German life into perspective, section four strives to give a summary of the German working class from the start of World War I to January 1931 shortly before the Institute went into exile. Then, in section five, the gap is filled from where section two left off to cover the period leading up to 'The Impotence of the German Working Class.' Horkheimer's most compact writing of the workers then follows in section six to unpack 'The Importance of the German Working Class.' Before some conclusions were finally arrived at, section seven makes reference to some still unattended aspects of Horkheimer's inaugural lecture.

2. Horkheimer's early thinking from 1912 to 1919, when he entered university

Max Horkheimer grew up in a privileged environment – in a well-to-do family with a successful business that produced textiles for the World War I economy. Although Max's father cared for, and treated their workers well, he was still opposed to their unionization. This led to strikes towards the end of World War I in the Horkheimer's family factory.

It was amongst these conditions in his mid-teens, that young Horkheimer was expected to work in the family business and to prepare him to take it over at some point in future. Accordingly, he was made junior director in the business not long before he finally entered the war in September 1916. As a result Horkheimer was at a young age directly in control of their factory workers since one of his responsibilities was to supervise them.⁸ Although sympathetic to the workers in general and critiqued the position of the workers in German society, he was also critical of the broader capitalist system. In addition, Horkheimer and a number of close Institute members never gave up their own *haute bourgeoisie* lifestyles.⁹ Similarly, Peter Hamilton proposed that 'the failure of the Frankfurt School to generate a coherent paradigm of Marxist social theory in the refusal of its main figures to reach down from the high plane

⁸ McCole, J., S. Benhabib. and J. Bonß. 'Introduction. Max Horkheimer: Between Philosophy and Social

Science', in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.3.

⁹ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, p.36.

of philosophical contemplation to the murky waters of history and empirical facts'¹⁰ reflects an air of intellectual aloofness as well.

In a letter to Pollock dated 9 September 1912, Horkheimer (he was now seventeen years old) wrote about his general dissatisfaction with the social world of the bourgeoisie.¹¹ For instance, he lamented how the lower classes in a bourgeois dominated society were 'forced into a brutal struggle for existence'.¹² Almost two decades later in 1930, Horkheimer explained this in more detail as follows.¹³ A core problem that the philosophy of history dealt with at the time, according to him had to do with the importance of the current issues in society. One such issue was that whilst the bourgeois society continued to establish itself in the system (read: capitalist society) it unshackled itself from feudalism. This, for Horkheimer, was a contradiction in terms.¹⁴ On the one hand this ever-increasing capitalist entrenchment in society gave rise to relations of power and domination – a society in which the lower classes were stripped from their freedom and subjected to different forms of coerced domination. Horkheimer wrote as follows: 'In real society, human beings are dominated by other human beings'.¹⁵ But, unlike the natural sciences, humans did not behave in the same manner in the present when compared to the past. The implication was that resistance to oppression differed under different circumstances as were the outcomes thereof. The struggles for power were in a sense the most 'profound expression of life'¹⁶ – for those who perpetrated oppression as well as for those who had to survive it. On the opposite side of oppression was 'the welfare of the whole [that] depends upon the unfolding of trade, upon the unchecked spread of bourgeois efficiency in business and industry, and upon the free play of economic power and that such social development can only be served by means of a powerful state authority'.¹⁷ But the modern capitalist state's virtue was suspect – it was so devoid of the 'sum essential qualities deemed to be desirable and respectable in social circles' that it compromised human virtue.¹⁸ Some

¹⁰ Bottomore, T. *The Frankfurt School*, p.9.

¹¹ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, p.24

¹² *Ibid.*, p.27.

¹³ Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History,' in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*. (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M. S. Kramer and J. Torpey), pp.314-388.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.314.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.316.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.317, 320.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.321.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

individuals for instance, the rich and capitalist upper crusts of society lived off their material gains without having to toil the land. Still, all life depended on work – those who let work and those who had to do the work. For both, real life conditions were driven by material need – for some to be accumulated at the expense of others who were in the service of the former.

Before continuing to discuss Horkheimer any further, a few comments from the above will be in place. Firstly, we find Horkheimer's critique of traditional philosophy – a theme that is present in practically all of his writings during his entire life. They represent the roots of his later development of Critical Theory.¹⁹ Secondly, the establishment of an exploitive capitalist oppressive system of society received Horkheimer's intense attention on a constant basis. Yet, financially he lived well therein for most parts of his life. Thirdly, Horkheimer benefitted greatly from his immediate capitalist environment – material conditions that he from time to time secured for himself and a few close colleagues around him. Lastly, whilst he had a strong sense of empathy for the conditions of the working class and campaigned for the betterment of total society, he nevertheless had some deep-seated ambivalent relationship with their course of bringing about a revolutionary change to capitalist realities. Lastly, like Bertrand Russell, Horkheimer was deeply opposed to the war effort even before its outbreak. For instance, shortly after the outbreak of the war, Russell wrote on 15 August 1914 to the *Nation* to protest against Britain's involvement in the destruction of Germany; how thousands of lives were mowed down by machine-guns, and about the primitive barbarism of unleashing instincts of hate and lust for blood against the essence of society.²⁰ Interestingly, it was at about the same time that Horkheimer's collections in *From Puberty* dealt with practically the same themes.

Naturally, Horkheimer's *From Puberty* and other writings between 1914 and 1918 are therefore important for this research as far as they provide his earliest thoughts about factors that influenced his formulations about society and specifically that of the workers. Horkheimer concerns about the plight of the workers dated back to even before he read Schopenhauer from May 1913 onwards. Schopenhauer's influence on Horkheimer is only of interest here as

¹⁹ See Horkheimer, M. 'Traditional and Critical Theory', in Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory. Selected Essays*, pp.188-243.

²⁰ Lewis, J.E. *A Short History of the First World War. Eyewitness Accounts of the War to End All Wars, 1914 -18*, p.25.

far as they relate to his views of the German workers. In the same vein, Brunkhust wrote that one of Horkheimer's philosophical intuitions is the solidarity of all human life in relation to universal suffering.²¹ This stemmed from Schopenhauer's legacy in Horkheimer.²² To take one example: shortly after mid-May 1913 when Horkheimer and Pollock arrived in Brussels, Pollock recommended Schopenhauer's *Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit* to Horkheimer – a work 'that proved decisive for his further intellectual development'.²³ Almost forty years later, Horkheimer still maintained that 'Schopenhauer is the teacher for modern times'.²⁴ Horkheimer wrote for instance, that 'The ending of almost all manual labor, especially of hard physical labor, is something he [Schopenhauer] foresaw more precisely than most of the economists of his day.'²⁵ This manifested itself many times in his early writings. His first teenager writings, written as diary entries, short stories and *novellas*, dealt with his own privileged material life, which he felt he lived at the expense of the workers, as well as his agony about such.²⁶ In *Dawn and Decline*, Horkheimer dealt with Schopenhauer on at least five occasions²⁷ – that is, long before he met Felix Weil with whom he and other close friends would establish the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. One of Horkheimer's first references to Schopenhauer was in 'The Freedom of Moral Choice', when he referred to Schopenhauer's morality.²⁸ Much later in his life, in a letter to Adorno dated 28

²¹ Engelbrecht, C. 'Max Horkheimer's Concept of "Suffering"'.
www.academia.edu/8790149/Max_Horkheimers_Concept_of_Suffering

15 October 2014, pp.1-22.

²² Brunkhurst, H. 'Dialectical Positivism of Happiness: Max Horkheimer's Materialist Deconstruction of Philosophy', in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, pp.69, 78.

²³ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.24-25; McCole, J., S. Benhabib, and W. Bonß. 'Introduction. Max Horkheimer: Between Philosophy and Social Science', in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.3, 5.

²⁴ Horkheimer, M. *Critique of Instrumental Reason. Essays and Lectures Since the End of World War II*.

(Translated by J. O'Connell and others), p.81.

²⁵ Ibid., p.65.

²⁶ McCole, S. Benhabib, S. and W. Bonß. 'Introduction. Max Horkheimer: Between Philosophy and Social Science', in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.3. For a comprehensive overview of Horkheimer's earliest writings see Chapter 1 of Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*.

²⁷ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, pp.87, 149, 157, 188, 219.

²⁸ Ibid., p.87.

August 1941 Horkheimer reminded him that his earliest writings dealt amongst other things, with human pain.²⁹ Then again, some two decades later in 'Schopenhauer the Optimist' written between 1961 and 1962, Horkheimer maintained that 'suffering is eternal'.³⁰ It is therefore no surprise that Horkheimer, much earlier in his life, explained how Schopenhauer was 'critical of life that surrenders to power'.³¹ Schopenhauer also wrote about the 'desolateness of the whole' – an extreme pessimism in my view that Horkheimer identified with.³² This stayed with Horkheimer his whole life – on 31 January 1971 he wrote: 'You see that I haven't in any way overcome my pessimism.'³³

John Abromeit argued that 'Horkheimer's early Critical Theory took shape as early as the late 1920s and that his basic theoretical assumptions were already in place when he became director'³⁴ of the Institute. When it comes to the research objective for this article, the contention herein is similar: Horkheimer's formulations about the position of the German workers, developed gradually from as early as his teenager writings and by January 1931, they were well formulated although he did not do so in one piece.

Horkheimer's inaugural lecture seems a logical cut-off point for this article. Inaugural lectures present incumbents with the unique opportunity to defend their views on the status of their research interests and the state of their sciences in general. Accordingly, Horkheimer gave an overview of the current state of social philosophy and also outlined the road ahead for the Institute.³⁵ In terms of the first, his view was 'that social philosophy is confronted with the yearning for a new interpretation of a life trapped in its individual striving for happiness'.³⁶ This statement was generic enough to cover Horkheimer's past and future interest in the workers. As far as the future function of social philosophy is concerned, he summarized it as follows: 'Its ultimate aim is the philosophical interpretation of the vicissitudes of human fate – the fate of

²⁹ Horkheimer, M. *A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.192.

³⁰ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.219.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.149

³² *Ibid.*, p.188.

³³ Horkheimer, M. *A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.367.

³⁴ Horkheimer M. 'Introduction', specifically "Overview of the Book's Structure and Content," in Abromeit, J.

Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School, pp.55-57.

³⁵ Horkheimer, M. 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social

Research', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*. (Translated by

G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. 'Introduction' by G.F. Hunter), pp.1-14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7.

humans not as mere individuals, however, but as members of a community. Thus it is above all concerned with phenomena that can only be understood in the context of human social life: with the state, law, economy, religion – in short, with the entire material and intellectual culture of humanity.’³⁷ Horkheimer’s concerns were not only about the multitude of ‘concrete ways in which human beings live together’³⁸ and how ‘social philosophy may well perform social functions’³⁹ but also with philosophy that will be influenced and changed by ‘concrete studies’.⁴⁰

In terms of the future role of the Institute, Horkheimer acknowledged his privileged position to ‘undertake to orient the work of the Institute toward *new* tasks’.⁴¹ Future work, he explained, would be based on a programme of ‘planned work’.⁴² Such work would investigate the relations between ‘economic life of society; the physical development of individuals, and the changes in the realm of culture in the narrower sense’.⁴³ In all of the above the position of the workers remained pivotal.

It is important to note at this point of our discussion, that the Institute’s interest in the position of the German workers, did not originate with Horkheimer or Felix Weil. Horkheimer only met Weil in Nov/Dec 1919.⁴⁴ Wiggerhaus described Weil as ‘one of those young people who had been politicized by the war and the November Revolution, who were convinced of the practicality and superiority of socialism as a more advanced form of economic organization, and who devoted themselves to the study of socialist theories so that they could take up leading positions in the workers’ movement or in a new socialist order as soon as possible’.⁴⁵ Instead, the conditions of the German workers were already of fundamental importance to Carl Grünberg’s (as first director of the Institute for Social Research) research interests – well before Horkheimer formulated his own views. Professor Grünberg was an acknowledged Marxist and from 1910 he edited the *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (*Archive for the History of Socialism and the Workers’ Movement*). In other words, Grünberg had an interest in the

³⁷ Ibid., p.1.

³⁸ Ibid., p.8.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.9.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.10. (Emphasis added.)

⁴² Ibid., p.11.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.55-57.

⁴⁵ Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*. p.13.

German working class well before Horkheimer had a consciousness thereof. Although Horkheimer and other younger members of the Institute did not agree with Grünberg's views, his nevertheless prevailed during the first decade of the Institute. Not surprisingly, Horkheimer's inaugural lecture announced fundamental shifts that would characterize the Institute's future. But by this time Horkheimer had already also disagreed with a number of academics at the university.

The contention herein is that the status and relative hegemonic position of workers in society were not mutually exclusive. Instead, they were merely different sides of domination. It is not unexpected, that from the beginning (of what would later become known as the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School), the concept of domination was one of the central themes in Critical Theory's philosophical thinking. As early as January 1916, Horkheimer wrote about the conditions of the workers and of his 'own guilt for enjoying privileges largely dependent of their toil'.⁴⁶ During the 1920s their position in society was more often written about. In 1930 Horkheimer wrote that 'Society is not just based on the domination of nature in the narrower sense ... it is equally based on the domination of human beings

by other human beings'.⁴⁷ Naturally, such domination included the exploited position of the German workers in society in general and their workplace in particular.⁴⁸ As a side comment, the eradication of all forms of domination in society remains to this day, a focus concern of not only Critical Theory but did not originate with Horkheimer.

It would not be long before Horkheimer rejected the dominant Marxist notion of the primacy of economic conditions that determined the social and political relations in society as a sufficient condition for understanding society. For instance, as early as 'Dusk' he critiqued capitalism;⁴⁹ in 'The Pitfalls of Terminology' he warned that even Marxists were too often inclined to present simple answers to materialism;⁵⁰ in 'Change of Thought' he argued that Marxist thinkers are wrong in their views that 'the real world is all about material things';⁵¹ and finally, in 'Skepsis and Morality' he wrote that 'Socialism does not

⁴⁶ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, p.35.

⁴⁷ Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History', in Horkheimer, M. *Between*

Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings, p.316.

⁴⁸ This issue will receive more detailed attention in section three, below.

⁴⁹ Horkheimer, M. 'Dusk', in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.17.

⁵⁰ Horkheimer, M. 'The Pitfalls of Terminology', in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.24.

⁵¹ Horkheimer, M. 'Change of Thought', in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.35.

“follow” from economic laws discovered by Marx’.⁵² By the end of the 1920s the Institute also incorporated psychosocial factors⁵³ into the comprehensive future study of the German working class. More than five decades later on 25 March 1972, Horkheimer wrote to Herman Mörchen (philosopher, student of Martin Heidegger and author of books on Adorno and Heidegger) that ‘however much Adorno and I accepted some theoretical aspects of the Marx oeuvre, there can’t any talk of us somehow having philosophically ascribed to the so-called Marxist tradition.’⁵⁴ This statement will receive some attention later herein.

An investigation into the position of the workers – as sociology of the working-class,⁵⁵ naturally stirs up interest into the central proposition of their *domination* as workers in bourgeois society. Already in ‘Dusk’ in *Dawn & Decline*, Horkheimer wrote about ‘key conceptual techniques of domination’.⁵⁶ Such undertaking needs to be cognisant of the complexities of Weimar modernity. Here the recent work of K. Braskén is of relevance. He drew attention to the fact that research focused on the labour movements’ organisations and tends to emphasize their focus on development ‘into significant membership organisations’.⁵⁷ The *praxis* of the working class developed in Weimar Republic ‘a new culture of international solidarity’.⁵⁸ Such, I suggest, must not be interpreted in absolute terms.

One should also remember that Horkheimer was well travelled. As arranged by his father, he left school prematurely (during 1911 at the age of fifteen) to work in the family business to prepare him for a career therein. As a result, from 1911 to 1916, Horkheimer worked either in the family business, or to gain additional business experience, in factories in e.g. Brussels, Manchester for instance, and he visited Paris, Calais, London and Stuttgart. Not surprisingly, Horkheimer also completed a six months internship at *Württembergische Vereinsbank*. Thus, Horkheimer found himself amongst the industrial wage

⁵² Horkheimer, M. ‘Skepsis and Morality’, in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, pp.35-37.

⁵³ Steinberg, S. ‘A Letter and Reply on Theodor Adorno’, in *World Socialist Web Site*, 2 November 2009.

⁵⁴ Horkheimer, M. *A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.373.

⁵⁵ Honneth, A. ‘Max Horkheimer and the Sociological Deficit of Critical Theory’, in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J.

McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.206.

⁵⁶ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.17. For a detailed description of these, see section 3 below.

⁵⁷ Braskén, K. ‘In Pursuit of Global Solidarity? The Workers’ International Relief, Willi Müzenberg and the

Comintern, 1921-1935.’ <<https://academia.edu/5819531>>, p.7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.11.

workers who by 1907, already made up 30,6% of the German workforce.⁵⁹ The experiences that Horkheimer gained during these work stints, together with his soon-to-follow military service, left lasting impressions on him. Then, during his first recruitment meeting for military service in January 1916 (although he was not drafted at that point), Horkheimer wrote in his journal about his struggle with his guilt feelings for resisting the war, whilst other young recruits joyfully joined the military in the name of, and for, their Fatherland. Horkheimer's second direct contact with the war effort was in September 1916 when he was finally drafted. His military training took place in Aalen, a small town 75 km east of Stuttgart where he worked as a medical aid in a regiment that travelled much of southern Germany, but never to the front. In the spring of 1918, when his regiment was in Munich, Horkheimer was sent to a doctor, declared unfit for further military service and discharged. He would, however spent time in an asylum until the end of that year. In a letter to Rosa Riekher and Friedrich Pollock dated 22 August 1918, Horkheimer ask them if they knew that his 'cousin Sigi (Cahn) was killed in the war?'⁶⁰ By this time Horkheimer often made the war conditions the theme of his youth writings and frequently appeared in his letters.

It was a time when the rescheduling of the future German political agenda was near.⁶¹ Germany and the world would change for ever. The war 'not only diverted human effort but also affected seriously the global political system [...] it characterized change and continuity'.⁶² From this four-year-conflict of global proportions emerged the Russian Revolution, later the rise of Hitler, the Second World War, Britain's decline, the rise of America's dominance and 20th century

⁵⁹ Knox, M. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/1933. Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist*

Dictatorships, Vol. 1, pp.69-70.

⁶⁰ Horkheimer, M. *A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*. (Edited, translated, and with an Introduction by Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson), p.16.

⁶¹ Petersson, F. 'In Dire Need of a Colonial Agenda? The Mobilization and Responses of the Labour Socialist

International on the Emergence of the League against Imperialism.' (Paper presented on 23 Feb 2013 at the

'Crisis and Mobilization after 1789.') Organized by the HOSAC, Amsterdam, 22-24 Feb 2013.

<www.academia.edu/4284979/In_Dire_Need_of_a_Colonial_Agenda_The_Mobilization_and_Responses_of_the_Labour-Socialist_International_on_the_Emergence_of-the-> p.1.

⁶² Razzak, F. 'The Aftermath of World War II; An Overview.'

<http://www.academia.edu/5473903/The_Aftermath_of_World_War_II_An_Overview>, p.1.

Middle Eastern instability. The war left 9 million combatants and 5 million civilians dead.⁶³ Against this background, Horkheimer (as well as a large proportion of returning German soldiers) soon questioned the political and military leaderships' propaganda influencing mass support for the national war course as just and ultimately victorious ideals. Secondly, their practices to match political ends with military means⁶⁴ seemed farfetched. As the war unfolded, according to Knox, it passed through three stages: from initial euphoria and sweet anticipation of redrawing the European map, to death, disillusion and increasing fragmentation, and the thirdly, exhaustion, defeat and humiliation and rise of new myths.⁶⁵ All of these became issues that Horkheimer would write about as he experienced them in life.

As we have already seen, clearly opposed to the German war effort,⁶⁶ and taking the above experiences together, Horkheimer was therefore well-placed to comment on the plight of the less fortunate in German society – for our purposes, the workers. Recently, M. Whittock described the German Workers' Party 'as a strange mixture of extreme nationalism, anti-Semitism and right-wing militarism, blended with a radical and semi-socialist resentment of capitalism, large department stores and unearned profits'.⁶⁷ It was, after all, a war for which 13 250 000 Germans were mobilized, of which 2 044 990 were killed and 4 148 158 were wounded⁶⁸ which Horkheimer had left behind. It was in the next phase of his life – the early 1920s – that Horkheimer would defend 'the critical political thrust of the French Enlightenment in particular'⁶⁹ in his efforts to gain an understanding of the world (he often called it the 'present

⁶³ Lewis, J.E. *A Short History of the First World War. Eyewitness Accounts of the War to End All Wars, 1914–18*, p.1.

⁶⁴ Knox, M. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/1933. Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist Dictatorships*, Vol.1, p.144.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.169.

⁶⁶ See for instance Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, Chapter 1, endnote 41.

⁶⁷ Whittock, M. *A Brief History of the Third Reich. The Rise and fall of the Nazis*, p.4.

⁶⁸ Giles, A.S.M. *Myths of War: Constructing and Challenging Literary Myths of the First World War in Germany, 1914-1930*, p.1.

⁶⁹ Abromeit, J. 'The Vicissitudes of the Politics of "Life:" Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse's Reception of

Phenomenology and Vitalism in Weimar Germany.' (Conference paper for 'Living Weimar: Between System and Self.' Sponsored by the department of Germanic Studies, University of Indiana, Bloomington, 22-23

September 2006.) <<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/bundle/2022/1833>>, p.27

situation') that he wanted (and seen) differently. For instance, Horkheimer and Pollock were closely involved in providing support to some of the supporters of the short-lived Council republic. But soon Horkheimer decided to leave Munich after two nerve-racking encounters with the police⁷⁰ in May 1919. In essence, at this time his political consciousness remained uncommitted to any formal political association or agenda and can hardly be described in terms of 'a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large'.⁷¹

Despite his father's attempts to integrate his son into the family business, Max (and his life-long friend Friedrich Pollock whom he met in 1911) instead, decided seemingly in September 1918, to attend university.⁷² Horkheimer made this decision at this time or shortly after he was discharged from any further military service. At this point of his life, Horkheimer still considered himself an artist and he still had a strong interest in literature. However, the decision to attend university was based on his desire to gain knowledge of the most advanced contemporary theoretical foundations that would explain the social crises of his time. Nevertheless, by the time he entered university in Munich in 1919, and only sporadically attended lectures during that spring and summer, he still had no academic career in mind.⁷³ But later, in a letter to Rosa Riekher dated 30 November 1921, Horkheimer explained that his best intentions to obtain his degree, is painfully in contrast to how real life actually turns out around him.⁷⁴ About a month earlier he wrote how he became 'conscious of the complete dichotomy between being and reality'.⁷⁵ Horkheimer was clear that he had a *mission to fulfil*.⁷⁶ This mission can be seen in light of a larger view of the future. He wrote: 'We must search for substantive expressions about our life and its significance rather than formal epistemological laws, which are basically terribly unimportant.'⁷⁷ Horkheimer's clear views were formulated in the following manner: 'In reality I really have little desire to string together in my memory an enormous number of extraneous ideas, indifferent laws, and lifeless facts. I have little desire to continue concealing my own opinion.... It doesn't suit me to write things whose narrow boundaries are fixed a priori by the

⁷⁰ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.44-45.

⁷¹ Marx, K. and F. Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*, p.219.

⁷² Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, Chapter 1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

⁷⁴ Horkheimer, M. *A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*. (Edited, translated, and with an Introduction by Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson), p.21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.21-22. (Emphasis added.)

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.22.

mentality of those who will judge them. I feel as if I am in a cage.... I want to be and to create according to the principles of my own nature.’⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, he continued: ‘The more philosophy captivates me, the more I distance myself from what is understood as philosophy at this university.’⁷⁹ At this point Horkheimer had no idea that by the end 1920s he would be involved in research about the workers and that he would commit to such in his inaugural lecture of January 1931.

The build-up to Horkheimer’s formulation of his *mission* can be traced in two earlier letters from him – the first was dated 22 August 1918 to Rosa Riekher and Friedrich Pollock; the second also to Riekher dated 25 October 1921. In the former, Horkheimer expressed (amongst other things) his ‘distastefulness of the mundane’⁸⁰ and his criticism of being confined to ‘narrow environment’.⁸¹ His worldview led him to believe that ‘people are getting more stupid and bloody-minded by the day. We’re living in total darkness and in hell’.⁸² About fifty years later on 17 December 1972, Horkheimer reiterated these sentiments in a letter to Herbert and Inge Marcuse when he wrote: ‘I’m already quite old and am getting more stupid.’⁸³ To this Marcuse replied the following month in his own sense of pessimism when he wrote: ‘No, Max—we’re not getting more and more stupid, but this world is terrible and is becoming even more terrible, “beyond our capacity of imagination”’.⁸⁴ Horkheimer was nevertheless determined to complete his studies. In a letter to Riekher dated 30 November 1921, he wrote that he wants of settle down to obtain his degree.⁸⁵ In other words, whilst Horkheimer had strong views about the workers, he dealt with such in an increasingly philosophical sense and not in practical day to day activist manner. Towards the end of his life he described his personality as not suited to political activism. As a result it is doubtful if at any point, one can unequivocally agree with P.A. Murphy who wrote that ‘as Marxists, they [Horkheimer and the other founder members of the Institute] wanted to “educate” them [the workers], to change them, to “radicalize” them and possibly lead them in the revolution’.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.21-22. See also Engelbrecht, C. ‘Limitations in History. Part 1. The Problems With Historical Facts.’

7 June 2013 on <independent.academia.edu/christoengelbrecht/papers>, pp.1-12.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.22.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.7.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.9.

⁸² Ibid., p.15.

⁸³ Ibid., p.374.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.21.

⁸⁶ Murphy, P.A. ‘Horkheimer on the Culture Industry and False Consciousness.’

In order to have a clear understanding of the workers' position it would be appropriate to state at the outset, Horkheimer's views about the broader social stratification of society of his time,⁸⁷ as follows:

- Feuding tycoons (of different power arrangements)
- Lesser magnates, large landowners and their important co-workers
- Professionals
- Smaller employees, political stooges, the military
- Professors
- Engineers
- Heads of office, to typists
- In highly developed
- Small existence:
- capitalist countries.
- craftsmen
- grocers
- farmers
- Proletarians:
- most highly paid, skilled workers
- unskilled and permanently unemployed workers
- the poor, aged and sick.
- extended areas of Balkans, India, China and Africa
- coolies⁸⁸
- In colonial territories.
- suffering of animals.

Horkheimer's earliest writings 'L'île herureuse' contains a short piece 'War: A Correspondence' in which Horkheimer again wrote about his opposition to war.⁸⁹ In the short story 'Leonard Steiner', written in January 1916, Horkheimer's showed compassion for the plight of the working class and stated his own guilt and his desire for social change in an indirect manner. In 'Work' (a novella written in July 1916) the position of the socially underprivileged and works again received his attention.⁹⁰ A few months later Horkheimer wrote

<paulaustinmurphyonisrealeanti-zionism.blogspot.com/2013/03/Horkheimer-on-culture-industry-false.html>

⁸⁷ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.66.

⁸⁸ This term is used in context and not as a derogatory label.

⁸⁹ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, p.28 ff.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p.35. See also Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*,

‘Gregor’ and again the dilemmas of the workers made up the background of the story.⁹¹ In a novella written in July 1916, Horkheimer wrote about working circumstances of factory workers – they being incited to revolution; with long working hours; monotony of the work; and the impossibility to develop themselves spiritually and intellectually, as well as their failure to respond to revolution.⁹² Needless to say, Horkheimer was suspicious of party politics and he was disappointed with the inability of mass-politics to bring about revolutionary social change in immediate post-war Germany. According to him, amongst the working class as well the politicians, there was a loss of their credibility.⁹³

The book *Dawn & Decline* includes both Horkheimer’s *Dämmerung* [1926-1931] and *Notizen in Deutschland 1950-1969*. Originally, *Dämmerung* was published in 1934 under Horkheimer’s pseudonym, Heinrich Regius. Horkheimer did not write these undated journal entries for publication and therefore they did not appear in print. Nevertheless, they are important because in a sense, they portray the originality of his early thoughts more authentically than his more formal writings and later lectures. It contains the ideas that Horkheimer wrote between 1926 and 1931. They deal mainly with concepts of metaphysics, morality, personality and the value of the human being as he perceived them at the time. At some point Horkheimer regarded this work as outdated, incomplete, with repetitions and contradictions. These writings, Horkheimer maintained, were at best occasional notes written in Germany ‘during periods of rest from a demanding piece of work’.⁹⁴ Wiggerhaus summarised the contents of the 1926-1931 writings and how Horkheimer saw himself and his main concerns about social injustice and the differences between wealth and poverty.⁹⁵ It is not necessary to repeat such here. The second part of the book, *Notizen* is characterized by Horkheimer’s views of the changing nature of bourgeois culture and his observations of the disintegration of such society. These writings reflect his views of sociology of a society in transition. In other words, it reflects his views of the paradoxes of his age, which were also not part of this investigation.

p.43-44.

⁹¹ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.35-36.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp.32

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.37.

⁹⁴ Shaw, M. “Translator’s Preface”, in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.13.

⁹⁵ Wiggerhaus, R. *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, p.47

Between these two collections, are Horkheimer's experiences of fascism and authoritarian state socialism. The tone between the two sets of writings is different. In 1934 Horkheimer was still hopeful of collectivism and socialism, but by 1950 these views were replaced by pessimism. He started to reconsider his views of Marxism as he saw them in the late 1920s.⁹⁶ In 1930 Horkheimer wrote the 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History.' In the preface to this piece, Horkheimer said that it formed part of 'several studies that were undertaken toward the goal of self-clarification' for 'the quite practical purpose of learning something in the process'.⁹⁷ This study of Horkheimer links back well to his pre-1919 conceptions of the workers which was now embedded in a more philosophical framework. In a sense, class conflict was a necessary condition of human development,⁹⁸ because on the one hand those who controlled society did so to 'develop' it to their own benefit. On the other hand, the proletariat needed and resorted to conflict to be able to change their material conditions for their own 'development'. Horkheimer continued that 'Humans are driven to violent encounters by external living conditions.'⁹⁹ All social changes and relationships, whether they belonged to the political, religious, ethical or legal spheres of life were explained in these terms. Workers' violent resistance for instance, was a specific manifestation of their expressions, feelings and instinctual drivers. In fact, on 31 January 1971, Horkheimer wrote to Joachim von Zedtwitz (physician, psychoanalyst, painter who worked to save Jews during the Holocaust) 'that I haven't yet in any way overcome my pessimism.'¹⁰⁰

This raises the question of the relationship between the individual and the whole of society as a collective. Firstly, throughout his entire life, Horkheimer time and again expressed his fears about the individual being 'absorbed' into mass society and therefore became deprived of its position in civic life. For the individual, as was the case for groups of people, freedom of will and freedom of action were minimum human conditions in an enlightened society. The contradiction arose when the state could not accommodate the harsh reality that society was not a homogeneous amorphous collective. Yet, the state depended on the social groupings that it was supposed to represent at any

⁹⁶ Shaw, M. 'Translator's Preface', in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.13.

⁹⁷ Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History', in Horkheimer, M. *Between*

Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings, p.313.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.326.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Horkheimer, M. *A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*, p.367.

given point in time. These contradictions, we will see below, were at the centre of workers' *praxis*. For instance, property was considered is the objective basis of the actual inner state of human beings. It characterized both capitalist and worker, albeit in different terms. But it was the very same state that was supposed to effect the elimination of private property that ruined the human beings that were by nature good, since it misappropriated the material goods of its citizens. Thus: for Horkheimer 'the economic laws of the present has entrenched disparity of wealth and the happiness and unhappiness'.¹⁰¹ These conditions manifested itself in hunger, misery and the total control of all material resources to the extent that the survivors of these life conditions became wage labourers who had to sell their labour power. It led to the disintegration of society – exactly the opposite that the capitalist state wanted to achieve.

It was around this time (1930) that Horkheimer responded to Karl Mannheim's book (1929) *Ideology and Utopia*. A few observations are of relevance for our purposes. Horkheimer wrote that human 'perceptual apparatus and all categories and forms of perception are determined by historical and sociological conditions'.¹⁰² There is however a further point to consider, that of 'class-bound false thought'.¹⁰³ It did not stand separate from bourgeois consciousness. It did not take cognisance of such and the rest of society. The fact remained that humans also knew themselves through history, and not through introspection alone. Human beliefs were therefore in concert with 'their practical applicability'¹⁰⁴ in real social circumstances. These and other central focus areas, for instance how domination of society came about, were again treated in his inaugural lecture early the next year.

3. Capitalism and the key conceptual techniques of domination.

We have seen above, that Horkheimer developed his views about the 'key conceptual techniques of domination'¹⁰⁵ from his early beliefs about the

¹⁰¹ Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History', in Horkheimer, M. *Between*

Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings, p.371.

¹⁰² Horkheimer, M. 'A New Concept of Ideology?', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science*.

Selected Early Writings, p.130 – 131.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.131.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.141.

¹⁰⁵ Shaw, M. 'Translator's Preface', in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline* *Ibid.*, p.17.

conditions in the capitalist system. Brunkhorst for instance, wrote about Horkheimer's 'solidarity of all human life in the face of universal suffering'.¹⁰⁶ This is clear from his first aphorisms in *Dawn*. In 'Monadology' for instance, he used the term 'shared suffering'.¹⁰⁷ Three aphorisms later, in 'Unlimited Possibilities' we read: 'The populations of the cities witness the misery of the entire earth' and 'the horror of one's own city is submerged in the general suffering'.¹⁰⁸ These early views were unfortunately not dealt with in any systematic manner. In fact, 'the only completed conception that Horkheimer ever worked with was that of interdisciplinary materialism'.¹⁰⁹

In the aphorism 'The Struggle Against the Bourgeois', Horkheimer made a simple but poignant statement: 'Capital is concerned with profit, the proletariat with the liberation of mankind.'¹¹⁰ Horkheimer figuratively argued in the aphorism 'Character and the Structure of Society', that the majority of 'people are born into a prison, which is precisely why the present form of [capitalist] society, so-called individualism, is actually a society of standardization and mass culture. So called collectivism, i.e., socialism, on the other hand, is the development of individual talents and differences'.¹¹¹ The relative position of the individual *vis-a-vis* mass culture is a theme that can be followed throughout the writing career of Horkheimer. Unfortunately, it falls outside the scope of this article.

Horkheimer was in his mid-twenties/early thirties during the Weimar years. By then, he had first-hand experience of the numerous abuses of power, accompanied with cruelty and widespread human suffering¹¹² that characterized his world. The investigation here into the concepts of domination, takes place against Horkheimer's view that current times (meaning capitalist society) reflect a society based 'on the total negation of all human values'.¹¹³ During and

¹⁰⁶ Brunkhorst, H. 'Dialectical Positivism of Happiness: Max Horkheimer's Materialist Deconstruction of

Philosophy', in in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.69.

¹⁰⁷ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.18. Engelbrecht, C. 'Max Horkheimer's Concept of "Suffering"'.
<www.academia.edu/8790149/Max_Horkheimers_Concept_of_Suffering> 15 October 2014, pp.1-22.

¹⁰⁸ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.19.

¹⁰⁹ Habermas, J. 'Remarks on the Development of Horkheimer's Work', in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.52.

¹¹⁰ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.69.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.47.

¹¹² Whittock, M. *A Brief History of the Third Reich*, p.1.

¹¹³ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.75.

after World War I, large numbers of people were mobilized and engaged¹¹⁴ through the organs of power in and for the war related society. It was a time in which a significantly large proportion of injustices led to ‘the withering away of human capacities’.¹¹⁵ In this regard, Horkheimer wrote of both physical and spiritual killing.¹¹⁶ The latter receives attention in the last part of this section. The reality is that between the senseless beatings of people and violent death, according to Horkheimer, ‘exists a finely gradated scale of legal and extralegal punishments’.¹¹⁷ These drivers were not only institutionally driven. In order to avoid duplication, the ‘punishments’ will be dealt with as this section unfolds.

Against such background the attempt then, is to answer the question: what were the key conceptual techniques of domination that Horkheimer referred to in the very first aphorism, ‘*Dawn?*’ Provisionally, in our view, Horkheimer’s following sentence, gives an indication: ‘This applies not only to leading positions in the actual apparatus of suppression and the large-scale ideological institutions such as the military, the police, the church, philosophy and economics, but even to mere attitudes and beliefs.’¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, our analysis will not be limited to these five categories.

One point of debate herein, is the opposing view to that of Bottomore (and others) who maintained that Critical Theory (and by implication Horkheimer) had not ‘implied and greater attention [...] to historical processes’.¹¹⁹ Accordingly, so the argument goes, the Frankfurt School was characterised by its apparent ‘disregards of history’.¹²⁰ Instead, the view below is that Horkheimer had a strong sense for history – in other words that Horkheimer did not suffer from a historical deficit. Furthermore, the position is also that he followed two different methodological approaches in his writings. Careful reading of the origins of the bourgeois philosophy of history supports this view.¹²¹

When Horkheimer frequently wrote about ‘today’, the ‘present’, the ‘prevailing order’ or ‘bourgeoisie epoch’, he more often than not, placed such discussions in its historical context together with strong links to earlier

¹¹⁴ Whittock, M. *A Brief History of the Third Reich*, p.1.

¹¹⁵ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.38.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.110.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.30, 59.

¹¹⁹ Bottomore, T. *The Frankfurt School*, p.9.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.71 ff.

¹²¹ Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, pp.313-388.

historical times.¹²² On other occasions, he would start with history of some centuries ago and then concluded his investigation(s) with the present. Two examples will suffice. In the first instance, Horkheimer made it clear that the 'worst sort of capitalist practice'¹²³ have been perpetrated for centuries – in fact, it has been present 'throughout the known course of history'.¹²⁴ From this perspective, he started with the present and worked backwards. Secondly, and together with Adorno, they analysed the Enlightenment by using the second methodological approach.¹²⁵ In those instances, he (they) ended up with the present. Horkheimer's sense for history is also reflected in present-day human suffering that stemmed back to the origins of the capitalist system. He wrote: 'The world is the house of the ruling class.'¹²⁶ In 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History', Horkheimer traced the origins of bourgeois society as far back to feudal times.¹²⁷ In more than a few instances, Horkheimer would resort to earlier classical philosophers to make his point.

Although Horkheimer critiqued capitalism from his earliest writings onwards, the formulation in the aphorism, 'A Premium Placed on Vileness' described his views best. He penned it as follows: "The capitalist system in its present phase [mid-1920s] is organized exploitation on a world-wide scale. Its preservation creates boundless suffering. This society certainly has available the human and technical means to abolish the most blatant forms of physical wretchedness. We know of no era where this possibility existed to such a degree.'¹²⁸ A few years later (around 1930), he formulated the same belief in 'Horror Stories' as follows: 'for the sake of naked profit, all those that stand for humanity and spirit in a country are murdered, entire social classes are kept in fear and despair, nations are ignominiously enslaved and even wiped out, the bourgeois layman turns into a critical historian of painstaking precision'.¹²⁹ Horkheimer felt so strong about the destructive powers of capitalism that

¹²² The reality is that Horkheimer used dozens of synonyms interchangeably to refer to the "present."

¹²³ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.18.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.85.

¹²⁵ See specifically Chapters 2 and 3 in Horkheimer, M. and T. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*.

¹²⁶ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.73.

¹²⁷ Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, pp.314 ff; Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.28.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

‘Capitalism’, he wrote earlier, ‘threatens mankind’.¹³⁰ The Treaty of Versailles serves for Horkheimer as an example of the perpetuation of capitalist property relations at the expense of the proletariat. Whilst the children of the proletariat starved to death, the rich and powerful attended banquets.¹³¹

Post-war German society was characterized by propaganda of the mass organizations to the left and right¹³² of the political spectrum. The successful manipulation of images and information¹³³ gained momentum as Germany moved towards Nazism. For Horkheimer, there were simple truths¹³⁴ about the key concepts of domination which the ruling class employed to suppress the rest of society. The first key conceptual technique of domination is that through ‘systematically engineered brainwashing’¹³⁵, society was made to believe that capitalist practises seemingly ‘benefitted’ the workers.¹³⁶ Instead, capitalist propaganda and ‘straightforward brainwashing’¹³⁷ were only two sides of the same key conceptual technique that was employed to oppress the workers and middle class. The ‘benefits’ of capitalism that society was made to believe were pure myth. For instance, the hard work of the poor could not be properly calculated nor comprehensively established.¹³⁸ On one occasion, in the aphorism ‘Time is Money’, Horkheimer questioned the ‘value’ of the worker relative to that of a capitalist industrialist (e.g. Mr Krupp).¹³⁹ On another occasion, in ‘Everyone Must Die’, Horkheimer asked to ‘consider whether the death of a millionaire is the same as that of a proletarian’.¹⁴⁰ He also questioned ‘how many hundreds of lives of workers would have to be added up to equal the value of a moderately well-off banker’s day’.¹⁴¹ The point is that without money, one is nothing.¹⁴²

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.17.

¹³¹ Ibid., pp.74-75.

¹³² Petersson, F. ‘In Control of Solidarity? Willi Muzenberg, The Workers’ International Relief and League against Imperialism, 1921-1935.’ (CoPoWa-Comintern Working Paper 8/2007.)

<www.academia.edu/437174/In_Control_of_Solidarity_Willi_Muzenberg_the_Workers_International_Relief_and_League_against_Imperialism_1921_1935_>, p.4.

¹³³ Whittock, M. *A Brief History of the Third Reich*, p.1.

¹³⁴ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.17.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.17, 48.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.21.

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp.83, 93.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.18.

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp.22-23.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.39.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.23.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.43.

Secondly, according to Horkheimer, the myth of progress underlined the contradiction that 'the masses suffer from an outdated society'¹⁴³ because 'progress is the improvement of material existence and it only means something to the people who can implement relatively accidental value'.¹⁴⁴ Such was the position of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the workers, since capitalism, for Horkheimer, equated to 'shared suffering'.¹⁴⁵ The belief in 'progress' was symptomatic of a false-consciousness. On numerous occasions Horkheimer pointed out that so-called technological advances have not rid modern urban society from general its suffering and misery.¹⁴⁶ For Horkheimer, the present conditions reflected the simple truth that the present (meaning capitalism) triumphed.¹⁴⁷ In fact, 'the history of the masses is largely one of suffering'.¹⁴⁸ There is an obvious similarity between this sentence and Marx's view 'That history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'.¹⁴⁹ This boundless suffering¹⁵⁰ of today's exploited class was the result of ideology that reflected that the exploitation of material base can no longer be justified.¹⁵¹ This rendered present society out-of-date.¹⁵² Furthermore, to walk away from 'the general machinery of exploitation'¹⁵³ would do nothing to alleviate 'inordinate'¹⁵⁴ and 'unnecessary material and spiritual suffering'.¹⁵⁵ Since Abromeit already dealt with what he called 'surplus suffering' meaning 'suffering that could be eliminated in a more rational society'¹⁵⁶ we will dispense with it here.

Thirdly, the language and logic employed by the tyrannical bourgeois dictators left much to be desired.¹⁵⁷ Once labelled by the powerful bourgeois, the less fortunate in society remain oppressed.¹⁵⁸ The 'scientific' language and logic in capitalist societies merely morally justified capitalism¹⁵⁹ and served no

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.93.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.18.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.19, 110. Engelbrecht, C. 'Max Horkheimer's Problems with Science, Technology and Hope.'

<independent.academia.edu/christoengelbrecht/papers>, pp.1-17.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.85.

¹⁴⁹ Marx, K. and F. Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*, p.218.

¹⁵⁰ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.28.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp.74, 29.

¹⁵² Ibid., p.94.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.84.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.48.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p.36.

¹⁵⁶ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, pp.160, 177.

¹⁵⁷ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, pp.20, 75-76.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.24.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp.36-37.

real other purpose. It was employed in a manner to break the will of the workers in their fight against capitalism.¹⁶⁰ Horkheimer warned against Marxist apparent theory and simplistic (matter-of-fact) understanding thereof that seemed sufficient to explain scientific categories¹⁶¹ – there were no truths ‘in simple terms’¹⁶² because of the close relationship between logic and content. It was for this reason that Horkheimer wrote: ‘One may be an adherent of Marx, provided one has the necessary degree of skepticism.’¹⁶³ But language has its shortcomings. On the one hand it formalized thought, on the other, it cannot make everything clear. At best, there was a close relationship between language and theory ‘to make things better’.¹⁶⁴ It is in this sense that language is vital in the struggle against the oppressor. Horkheimer wrote: ‘Language must [...] be prevented from creating the illusion of a community that does not exist in class society. It has to be used as a means in the struggle for a united world.’¹⁶⁵ No doubt, language was considered a tool for and against oppression¹⁶⁶ as was religion.¹⁶⁷

In the fourth instance, the workers and wretched in society found themselves in a precarious position. Their dependency on the capitalist system and the bourgeoisie, were full of contradictions. Whilst the latter occupy the ‘sunnier spheres of society’,¹⁶⁸ they – the most vicious people¹⁶⁹ – kept the wages of the working class so low that individual and/or collective action against this exploited position, would lead to more material distress. Secondly, the poverty trap was so severe that they did not even have enough means to be able to afford to find a better job.¹⁷⁰ Although he/she was dependent on work, the cost of going to work was so ridiculous that it did not make economic sense to go to work.¹⁷¹ They simply faced dismissal and will then naturally be worse off. In times of economic downturn, the workers were straightaway retrenched. In fact, they were the victims of violence¹⁷² and exploitive domination by the so-

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p.75.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.24.

¹⁶² Ibid., p.17.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.36.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.26, 31, 37.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.75.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.31.

¹⁶⁷ Horkheimer, M. ‘Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History’, in Horkheimer, M. *Between*

Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings, p.365.

¹⁶⁸ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, pp.77.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.43.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp.23-24.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.23.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp.22-23.

called idols that were for instance defended (propped up) by their own use of terror.¹⁷³ Horkheimer explained that the horrible people on top of society did not face the stark realities 'of decreasing wealth in social hierarchy' of the capitalist economy.¹⁷⁴ Any criticism against the system was in simple terms, 'remorselessly suppressed'.¹⁷⁵ For instance, jail sentences were common in German society at the time, as was deportation.¹⁷⁶ Criticism and punishment were two sides of the same coin between which the working class were sandwiched.

In the beginning of this section, some opening remarks were made about the circumstances in which violence is practiced. Through the use of violence, fear was instilled in the masses and the powerful were kept in place in society. They (the powerful elite) were also described as the horrible people on top of society. Tyrannical prison directors under whose noses the unemployed were beaten with the rifle butts,¹⁷⁷ for instance, stood out as clear misuse of their power positions for self-protection and self-gain. In other words, through zeal and terror, tottering idols were artificially upheld in society.¹⁷⁸

Worse were the behaviours of the police and military forces. On-going persecution and extermination were at the order of the day when 'conditions warrant[ed]' such. The police beat up the workers during protests and uprising, whilst barbarous soldiers reverted to torture and the killing people.¹⁷⁹ From truncheons, machine guns, to effective poison gas and grenades,¹⁸⁰ society suffered at the hands of those with sadistic instincts.¹⁸¹ Lies, murder and deportation at the hands of own (German) troops¹⁸² were realities the working proletariat faced. In addition, during times of civil war, the proletariat was the first to be murdered.¹⁸³

Horkheimer frequently referred to the close relationship between the ideas of the ruling class, religion and the nation.¹⁸⁴ In these times (the bourgeois

¹⁷³ Ibid., p.17.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.21, 43.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.28.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.24.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.17, 20, 21, 75.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.17.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.25, 75-76.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., pp.63, 76.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.105.

¹⁸² Ibid., pp.24-25, 34.

¹⁸³ Ibid., pp.42, 108.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.27, 88-91. Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.138.

epoch), he maintained, religion was not taken seriously.¹⁸⁵ What he termed 'the religious machinery' became the 'embodiment of capitalist morality'.¹⁸⁶ For instance, the relationship between religion and violence dated back to early biblical times when Christ used the rod to drive merchants from the temple. This relationship was also seen during the inter-war Germany when priests misused Christianity to assist the process of the extermination of millions of Christians.¹⁸⁷ In other words, wrote Horkheimer in 'A Different Kind of Criticism', that Christianity was employed as a tool to bring about changes to the existing material conditions – it had little to do with religion.¹⁸⁸ In fact, Christianity did not address the practices of capitalism which were merely a smokescreen for meaningless human existence. Religion was so arrogant that it hardly took notice of the death sentences of the day¹⁸⁹ of those who criticized capitalist society.¹⁹⁰ 'Christians' Horkheimer continued, 'remain unruffled when confronted with the misery of others'.¹⁹¹ Religion benefitted from the sophisticated social mechanisms such as 'good connections'¹⁹² through which people – including priests and ministers, were selected for privileged positions in society. Often Horkheimer turned to the history of religion to substantiate his views. For instance, reference was made to the merchants in the temple. Cryptic reference to the others can be condensed as follows. According to Horkheimer, the feud between Cain and Abel was a mythologized leftover of a revolution – 'an uprising of the slaves against their masters'.¹⁹³ Even in Machiavelli's writings, Horkheimer found enough reason to argue how religion was used in every age to keep the dominated classes under control.¹⁹⁴ The Inquisition (c.1232) was a time when the power of Christianity over people did not stand separate from 'the pistols of the rightists to their idealist doctrine'.¹⁹⁵ The St Bartholomew's Eve massacres (c. 1572), Horkheimer characterized as being symptomatic of imperialism for not even taking note of the death sentences of the day.¹⁹⁶ The power of the Catholic clergy were closely related to

¹⁸⁵ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.91.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.59.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.42-43.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.59.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.18-19.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.27-28.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.90.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.30.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.67.

¹⁹⁴ Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.322.

¹⁹⁵ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.38.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.19.

heretical ideas¹⁹⁷ as were the views of Protestantism's upholding of capitalist mankind.¹⁹⁸ The French Revolution attempted to put an end to Christianity through absolutism and during the inter-war years, German priests abused Christianity in the extermination of millions of Christians.¹⁹⁹

The above examples are merely listed here to indicate that with the power of history entrenched in religion, it would be difficult to make a new religion – not even science was qualified to judge the unconditionality of religion.²⁰⁰ For according to Horkheimer, religion maintained that capitalist masters were responsible for their acts of perpetrating war and peace.²⁰¹ In this regard, reference to the Versailles Peace treaty maintained that the capitalist peacemakers did nothing good for the masses – instead, 'public interest' was not served. Rather, the German working class was on the receiving end of a failed economic and financial system.

Shortly after the end of World War I Horkheimer decided to sit for his *Abitur* and then study psychology as a major field at the University of Frankfurt. According to Abromeit, the psychology department at this university 'had established itself as one of the most important centres in Europe for research in Gestalt psychology'. Professor Friedrich Schumann was Horkheimer's first dissertation supervisor until in the summer of 1922 when it was aborted. Soon thereafter, Horkheimer would study philosophy under Professor Hans Cornelius.²⁰² Psychology would however, remained important in Horkheimer's intellectual endeavours – he reiterated such in his inaugural lecture.

Horkheimer's view was that the capitalist economy favoured the psychological composition of the higher echelons of society. It did so at the expense of the lower societal strata that was not in a position to expose or rid themselves from their inhuman conditions.²⁰³ The lower classes were precisely in a disadvantaged position as a result of a lack of education and the unequal access to material means.²⁰⁴ Instead, education stood in good stead for the 'better educated' against 'those who are actually involved in the struggle'.²⁰⁵ The unemployed did not have the competences for education and organizing

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.69.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.104.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.42.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., pp.42, 65.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.87.

²⁰² Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, Chapter 2.

²⁰³ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.21.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp.24, 38.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.41.

themselves in society.²⁰⁶ At the same time however, it was a pedagogic error in finding no pleasure in learning.²⁰⁷ Although in a different context, Horkheimer made the same point when he encouraged that ‘anyone who keeps his eyes open and has a little money in his pocket actually has ample occasion to familiarize himself with this concept’.²⁰⁸

Horkheimer was sensitive to the current status quo at which according to him only psychology, biology and pathology were employed to understand the development of mankind. For him ‘the assessment of a person by psychological categories, thus deals with only one aspect of his existence’.²⁰⁹ Later, in his inaugural lecture, Horkheimer foresaw how ‘philosophers, sociologists, economists, historians, and psychologists are brought together in permanent collaboration to undertake in common that which can be carried out individually in the laboratory in other fields’.²¹⁰ Already in the mid-1920s, Horkheimer explained the close relationship between the importance of history and psychology. He did so as follows: ‘Precise knowledge of the historical situation will modify and deepen the psychological insight into individuals that lived in it. Conversely, a historical event cannot be made clear if the psychology of the actors is disregarded.’²¹¹ A few years later, by 1932, Horkheimer’s more comprehensive *Lecture to the Kant Society, Frankfurt am Main, ‘History and Psychology’*²¹² treated this theme in detail. In summary, an understanding of the oppressed classes does not only require an understanding of their real daily hunger experiences but also the reality ‘that they were also kept in a wretched intellectual and psychological state’.²¹³

Because the bourgeoisie lived at the expense of the victims of violence,²¹⁴ the destructive results of capitalism were truly widespread. Boom, bust, inflation and wars,²¹⁵ economic ruin for the workers, social ostracism, jail sentences, and death, were only some of the barbarous outcomes of capitalist practices. In fact, taking on a critical position towards capitalism, might lead to getting murdered – unless you left the country for overseas.²¹⁶ But the problem was that the

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p.62.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p.24.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.50.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.56.

²¹⁰ Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.9.

²¹¹ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.56.

²¹² Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, pp.111-129.

²¹³ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, pp.88-89.

²¹⁴ Ibid., pp.17, 22.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p.50.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p.45.

colonies themselves suffered at the hands of developed capitalist mother country's exploitation. Soon Horkheimer would write in 'Right of Asylum', that 'should someone raise his hand against the monster of cartel-capitalism, he will no longer find a place to hide from the claws of power'.²¹⁷ The capitalists had nothing but contempt for the proletariat and looked down on them and treated them accordingly. Two decades later, in the mid-1940s, Horkheimer dealt extensively with human reason (or the lack thereof.) The aim, he wrote, was 'to inquire into the concept of rationality that underlies our contemporary industrial culture, in order to discover whether this concept does not contain defects that vitiate it essentially'.²¹⁸ Not surprisingly, Horkheimer called for the bringing to an end of the capitalist profit compulsion and suffering in irrational societies.²¹⁹ This irrationality was cemented in 'the misery of the employ[ed] that continue[d] to be the condition for and basis of this form of society'.²²⁰ How such reflected itself in society would necessitate a look at the period under investigation.

4. Cryptic observations about the German working class between c.1914-1931

To attempt a general overview of the above, is to challenge the near-impossible – it would either be too short, incomplete, too general, or all of the aforementioned. The associated literature is vast and many gifted minds applied themselves thereto – often from different perspectives therefore arriving at opposing conclusions. Nevertheless, for the purposes herein, it remains important to give some backdrop against which Horkheimer formulated his views leading up to the end of January 1931.

Horkheimer's understanding of the German workers took cognisance of the divisions – in political and organisational terms – of the German labour movement.²²¹ Horkheimer was aware and critical of the 'sharpening

²¹⁷ Ibid., p.82. See also Engelbrecht, C. 'Marx's Theory of Colonisation and Contemporary Eastern Cape (South Africa) Historiography.' <<http://independent.academia.edu/christoengelbrecht/papers1755482>>

²¹⁸ Horkheimer, M. *Eclipse of Reason*, p.(v.)

²¹⁹ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, pp.66, 95, 49, 73, 84.

²²⁰ Ibid., p.62.

²²¹ Hemkel, K. 'The Weimar Republic – Can We Learn from It?' <politicalaffairs.net/the-weimar-republic-can-we-learn-from-it/>

contradictions of the capitalist organization of society'²²² that were responsible for the divisions under which people lived. One such organization was the influence of war on society. Amongst many other characteristics, war divides and stratifies society – it disrupted also bourgeois values. Society's division into classes was determined by the position of the citizenry within the processes of production.²²³ No doubt, producers and consumers of war goods held positions of diverse social standings in society. The workers producing the goods were in most instances the furthest remove from the benefits of their labour. But, those for who were produced were the closest recipients of the benefits. In this sense, the workers as a class, fitted into a broader collective of 'social interest groups within a wider range of social contexts'²²⁴, but subjected to the 'unjust distribution of goods'.²²⁵ Take for instance the following example: war, Horkheimer and many others believed, was the capitalist pursuit for material and political self-gain. Ironically, when needed 'Germany was having to release men *from* the front to work in arms-related factories'.²²⁶ In other words, the lower classes could not escape their lot – were sent to war by the powers to be, but then soldiers-turned-workers by other powers to be. This underscores their position of nothingness in a capitalist society – one that Horkheimer vividly described using a wide variety of adjectives, some of which were employed herein.

It is this position, Georg Lukács claimed, that determined human consciousness²²⁷ – of course, he restated Marxian theory. These two statements accurately encompass the relative position of the Germans workers of the inter-war period. On the one hand, large numbers of the working class promptly reported for war,²²⁸ but on the other, as time went on, they realized that their

²²² Bonß, W. 'The Program of Interdisciplinary Research and the beginnings of Critical Theory', in Benhabib, S.,

W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.102.

²²³ Lukács, G. *History and Class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, p.46.

²²⁴ Curtis, D. 'Review: M. van der Linden and L. Lucassen (eds.) *Working on Labour: Essays in Honor of Jan*

Lucassen.' <[www.academia.edu/4119062/Review_M._van_der_Linden_and](http://www.academia.edu/4119062/Review_M._van_der_Linden_and_L._Lucassen_eds._Working)

[L._Lucassen_eds._Working](http://www.academia.edu/4119062/Review_M._van_der_Linden_and_L._Lucassen_eds._Working)

[_on Labor_Essays_in_Honor_of_Jan_Lucassen_Leiden_Brill_2012](http://www.academia.edu/4119062/Review_M._van_der_Linden_and_L._Lucassen_eds._Working)>, p.1.

²²⁵ Schmidt, A. 'Max Horkheimer's intellectual Physiognomy', in Benhabib, S., W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On*

Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives, p.26.

²²⁶ Lewis, J.E. *A Short History of the First World War. Eyewitness Accounts of the War to End All Wars, 1914 –*

18, p.3.

²²⁷ Lukács, G. *History and Class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, p.18.

²²⁸ Knox, M. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/1933. Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist*

material class aspirations were at risk.²²⁹ It is furthermore questionable to what extent the party (and its leaders) effectively promoted the interest of the workers. The situation was complicated by the military's suspicion of the workers' parties since they were generally viewed as either socialist or communist.²³⁰ Furthermore, the initial and general belief in an inherent solidarity between Germany's home and military fronts, assumed an 'identity between *Volk* and state' that proved incompatible for years to come.²³¹ However, the working-class districts and countryside lacked the jubilant crowd scenes of e.g. central Berlin at the outbreak of the war.²³² It does not come as a surprise that Berlin was a major centre of civil discontent even before the war came to an end.

As World War I unfolded, growing restlessness in major industrial parts of the German society set in: dissatisfaction with the war effort itself; the failing interwar political system; and a wide range of socio-economic problems were at the order of the day. According to Rachleff, discontent mainly amongst the sailors, soldiers and workers are important in any analysis of the German situation since combined they made up the majority of the population. One example by Rachleff will suffice to give an indication of their daily lot in life. The average real wages of the best paid German industrial workers dropped by 21,6% between March 1914 and September 1916, whilst that of all other workers, fell by 42,1%²³³ for the same period. Accordingly, the majority of the wage-workers were not in a position to provide for enough food. Furthermore not only could they not afford enough food, there was simply not enough food produced. Knox gave a valuable set of variables. For instance, before 1914, Germany imported 19% of its dietary calories, 27% of its protein, and 42% of the required fats. According to optimistic projections in late 1914 by German specialists, painstaking management of domestic production and the use of substitutes, they argued, would provide in 90% of the pre-war calories required and 85% of pre-war protein needed for an indefinite period, was simply not

Dictatorships, Vol.1, p.170.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.147.

²³⁰ Shirer, W.L. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. A History of Nazi Germany*, p.54.

²³¹ Knox, M. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/1933. Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist*

Dictatorships, Vol.1, p.182.

²³² *Ibid.*, p.170.

²³³ Rachleff, P. 'Working-class Activity and Councils - Germany 1918-1923.'

<libcom.org/history/working-class-activity-councils-germany-1918-1923-peter-rachleff>, p.2.

available.²³⁴ The reality was that the preferred German diet was short of e.g. butter and *Wurst*. Secondly, according to Knox, German society was in desperate need of a continuous and reliable distribution system that could provide in the supply of food and other necessities on time and where it was needed most. Thirdly, working class families simply did not have enough cash to sustain life. Inflation constantly eroded the value of the German currency to practically nothing. Many stories were told and pictures shown, of a wheelbarrow full of paper money that could hardly pay for one loaf of bread – not necessarily because of the price of bread, but rather because of the low value of the devalued German currency.

In addition German society was characterised by unequal access to what insufficient food there was.²³⁵ Their discontent was further compounded by the fact that daily human suffering was unequally distributed in society. The workers in the war-economy were better paid than those not, and thus they, together with the wealthy of society, felt the daily impact of e.g. inflation and scarcities, less.²³⁶ This meant that after the rich, well-connected, army and navy were fed, only then came the workers who were not involved in the war economy; the hapless city-dwellers,²³⁷ and finally the *lumpenproletariat*. Only two years later, by July 1917, official food rations were down to merely 1 100 calories per person per day. This figure was well below the theoretical standard of 3 000 calories per day required to support an adult male for a day. By the summer of 1918, meat rations dropped to 11,8% of the average pre-1914 consumption²³⁸ and the under-fed urban population experienced the realities of ‘meatless week’s’.²³⁹ Some eight decades ago, well-known historian H.A.L. Fisher stated the situation simplistically but to the point: ‘the German people, who were hungry, miserable, and now [...] in despair, wanted peace, and peace at once’.²⁴⁰ Already in the mid-1920s, Horkheimer stated this in an aphorism ‘Limits of Freedom’, as follows: ‘In the factories, the mines, the offices, the

²³⁴ Knox, M. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/1933. Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist Dictatorships*, Vol.1, p.184.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Rachleff, P. ‘Working-class Activity and Councils – Germany 1918-1923.’ <libcom.org/history/working-class-activity-councils-germany-1918-1923-peter-rachleff>, p.2.

²³⁷ Knox, M. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/1933. Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist Dictatorships*, Vol.1, p.184.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., p.197.

²⁴⁰ Fisher, H.A.L. *A History of Europe*, p.1150.

proletarian is already spurred by hunger.'²⁴¹ Clearly, this view of Horkheimer dated back to at least the mid-war period, if not earlier. About 25 years later, World War II produced worse human experiences.

During the entire war period, the general living conditions (e.g. hunger) gave rise to distinct class polarization because the working masses realized that those who governed them; those who imposed rations; those who drove the war effort, and those least affected by deteriorating living conditions, were one and the same people. On the one hand, the trade unions and Social Democratic Party, supported the government's foreign and domestic policies, thus leaving the workers, on the other hand, without support for their cause. As mass actions increased, government in some instances drafted the discontented and rebellious in society and used them to keep the masses in check - thus practicing a form of 'militarization of labour'.²⁴² So, we have now seen different sets of realities regarding the workers; first forced into labour, then forced into war, then turned labours again in the war manufacturing workplaces and then also into the 'militarization of labour'. Higher up in the social stratified society, were the large officers' 'cast'²⁴³ that lived comfortably in the greater military complex. Stories about officers' (read military elite) reprehensible high living at the expense of the lower ranks of soldiers and the society in general, became common reason for a 'steady increase in desertion'.²⁴⁴ Before the end of the war, 35% of the German national wealth was tied up in steel, high explosives and general war requirements.²⁴⁵ The economy was severely cash-strapped and short-supplied of able labour. For instance, already in September 1915, Karl Liebknecht wrote: 'The way we were being used is careless and criminal.'²⁴⁶ About three months later, General Erich von Falkenhayn (Chief of the General Staff of the Army in the Field) wrote that 'the winter after next will bring food crises, and social and political crises that always follow them'.²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.28.

²⁴² Rachleff, P. Rachleff, P. 'Working-class Activity and Councils - Germany 1918-1923.' <libcom.org/history/working-class-activity-councils-germany-1918-1923-peter-rachleff>, p.2.

²⁴³ Fisher, H.A.L. *A History of Europe*, p.1107.

²⁴⁴ Knox, M. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/1933. Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist Dictatorships*, Vol.1, pp.182-183.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p.223.

²⁴⁶ Lewis, J.E. *A Short History of the First World War. Eyewitness Accounts of the War to End All Wars, 1914 - 18*, p.49.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p.162.

This practice did not help the growing dissatisfaction amongst the workers. The period leading up to and including the November revolution in 1919, saw increased number of massive strikes throughout Germany. The food crisis worsened, serious breakdowns in the national transport systems led to fuel shortages, in turn to factories having to close and more workers were left stranded without work and income. Also amongst the workers, the Russian revolution of February 1917 raised their hopes that new political-economic reforms would be forthcoming. Instead between 200 000 – 300 000 workers struck in April 1917 in Berlin. In Leipzig workers drafted their specific political demand and elected delegates to present these demand to the Chancellor. Mutiny in the navy broke out in June 1917 and on ships of Squadron IV. Early January 1918 saw massive strikes and protests in Vienna against the failure of the peace talks. By the end of the year, sailors, soldiers, and workers struck together. At the time of the November revolution, mass demonstrations and a spirit of revolt spread rapidly to, and in factories, barracks and spilled over into the streets. General E. von Ludendorff wrote on 8 August 1918 about the general feeling of insubordination which soldiers brought back with them after a period of military leave at home.²⁴⁸ On 7 November 1918 a civilian R.M. Rilke wrote that Munich ‘has lost its nothingness [...] We had a remarkable night behind us. Here also a council of soldiers, peasants and workers has been established with Kurt Eisner as the first President’.²⁴⁹ He continued that the disorganisation and lack of discipline in the German Army as well as the general spirit of revolution spreading through Germany were reasons for the suffering of the German people.²⁵⁰ The Workers’ Councils set up in factories did not achieve lasting results – on the one hand they did not want to gain and remain in political and economic control for too long, and on the other hand, those entrusted with their interests, could not be trusted. On a few occasions, Horkheimer describes such as the inherent shortcomings of human virtue. Out of these circumstances, the workers came to the following realization: they were on their own and had to take action themselves in order to reconstruct industry; that strikes and similar actions, were the best method to express their desires; tactics of street battles were easily defeated militarily; electoral participation proved mixed results; that a revolutionary class consciousness was slowly developing; that the SDP was failing them; and that peaceful

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p.415.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.447 – 448.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p.449.

demonstrations were fraud with weaknesses.²⁵¹ For South African historian Martin Legassick, the failed revolutionary crisis in Germany, meant only a temporary but inescapable defeat for the workers and by 1923 when revolution swamped Germany again, the working class shifted decidedly to the left.²⁵²

About ten years later, wrote H. Thomas, power in the democratic world has shifted to the U.S.²⁵³ – Horkheimer was director of the Institute; the study of the workers had begun; Hitler seized power; unemployment stood at 30%,²⁵⁴ and Horkheimer was about to leave for America. The ‘fellowship of the trenches’, the war economy, and the scorn and hatred of the war profiteers (*Kriegsprofiteurs*), became the flipside of mass unemployment.²⁵⁵ A general situation of societal discontent became the norm. In fact, a sense of general confusion set in.

5. Horkheimer’s views of the workers up to ‘The Impotence of the German Working Class’

Under the heading ‘Unlimited Possibilities’, Horkheimer wrote that the skills of the workers over the last 100 years have developed, beyond all expectations.²⁵⁶ Yet, labour practices in larger business enterprises have not benefitted the workers²⁵⁷ since the relations and some conditions of production were simply geared to exploit labour for bourgeois capitalist interests. Clearly, there were severe tensions between the workers and big business and workers and intellectuals.

²⁵¹ Rachleff, P. ‘Working-class Activity and Councils – Germany 1918-1923.’

<libcom.org/history/working-class-activity-councils-germany-1918-1923-peter-rachleff>, pp.3-16.

²⁵² Legassick, M. *Towards Socialist Democracy*, pp.139-140.

²⁵³ Thomas, H. *World History. The Story of Mankind from Prehistory to the Present*, p.628.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Thomson, D. *Europe Since Napoleon*, pp.575-576.

²⁵⁶ Horkheimer, M. ‘Unlimited Possibilities’, in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.19.

²⁵⁷ Horkheimer, M. ‘Character of Getting Ahead’, in Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.21.

In his inaugural lecture on 24 January 1931 he dealt with their circumstances. At this occasion he committed Institute resources for future research initiatives.²⁵⁸ For instance, Horkheimer said that a 'branch office of our Institute will be opened in Geneva in order to facilitate the scholarly evaluation of the sociologically important material contained in the rich archives of the International Labor Office'.²⁵⁹ From this intellectual hub, the Institute would enhance the efforts of wider research initiatives into the history of the labour movement.²⁶⁰ An Institute member, Henryk Grossmann's letter to Paul Mattick in 1931, reflects the importance of this project. He wrote: 'Whoever in Western Europe wishes to write on the currents of the workers movement *must* come to us, for we are the only gathering point for it.'²⁶¹ This committed position of Horkheimer can be traced back to his early writing career as was shown earlier in the discussion of Horkheimer's *From Puberty*. In this way, I suggest we have gone the full circle, not least in this article.

From the outset, we must state that the workers as a class, in Horkheimer's terms, did not reflect cohesive solidarity.²⁶² In later years the ideological cohesiveness and practical use of solidarity,²⁶³ we will see below, showed how the fragmented position of the workers was stratified. The very notion of the concept worker also raised questions about e.g. a non-worker; the relation between the two; and the driving forces behind the factors that determined the existence of workers in relation to their continued exploitation. Already in his early writings, Horkheimer based his work on the writings of e.g. Machiavelli. For instance, ideology 'has a specific function in social struggle'²⁶⁴ whilst utopia

²⁵⁸ Horkheimer, M. 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social

Research', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.10.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p.13.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p.14.

²⁶¹ See for instance Jay, M. *The Dialectical Imagination. A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of*

Social Research 1923-1950, Chapter 1, endnote 40. (Emphasis in original.)

²⁶² Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.68.

²⁶³ Petersson, F. 'In Control of Solidarity? Willi Muzenberg, The Workers' International Relief and League against Imperialism, 1921-1935.' (CoPoWa-Comintern Working Paper 8/2007.)

<www.academia.edu/437174/In_Control_of_Solidarity_Willi_Muzenberg_the_Workers_International_Relief_and_League_against_Imperialism_1921_1935_> p.1.

²⁶⁴ Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History', in Horkheimer, M.

Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings, p.314.

'is the dream of the "true" and just ordering of life'.²⁶⁵ On the one hand, both ideology and utopia orientated the future lives of people either as individuals or as a people belonging to a group. On the other hand, the orientations of people were further influenced by the rise of modern natural science during the Renaissance when the aim of empirical science was 'to dominate nature to the greatest extent possible'.²⁶⁶ In reality this meant that society was not only built on the domination of nature, but also on 'the domination of human beings by other human beings'.²⁶⁷ Interestingly, the development of technology in tandem with industry grew from the rise of modern science, but that of the workers did not. As a result, technology contributed in its own way to foster and further domination of the workers. This is a separate theme that runs through Horkheimer's writings, and not the primary focus in this article. From the above, we state that ideology, utopia, science, technology and industry, are all essential conditions for the advancement of conflict between classes.

For some theoreticians, the rudimentary origins of capitalism were traced back to the 11th century,²⁶⁸ whilst Machiavelli, wrote Horkheimer, went only as far back as the Renaissance²⁶⁹ where he found the early foundations of the proletariat. When Horkheimer discussed (in 1930) Karl Mannheim's conceptions of ideology, he wrote that 'the relationship of the landowner to his workers is "capitalistic," and thus cannot be comprehended in feudal terms'.²⁷⁰ When Machiavelli however, made a distinction between the lowest of people and plebeians, on the one hand, and the nobility and princes²⁷¹ on the other, he considered this as 'the first beginnings of the modern proletariat'.²⁷² Also typical of Italian society at the time of Machiavelli's writings were the close relationship between soldiers and civilian work that needed to be done in and for society. Often the distinctions were blurred. Civilian work was regularly performed by the servants to satisfy the ambitions of a prince²⁷³ but in more

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p.315.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p.316.

²⁶⁸ See for instance Pirenne, H. *Stages in the Social History of Capitalism*.

²⁶⁹ Horkheimer, M. 'Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History', in Horkheimer, M. *Between*

Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings, p.363.

²⁷⁰ Horkheimer, M. 'A New Concept of Ideology?', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science*.

Selected Early Writings, pp.147-148.

²⁷¹ See Machiavelli, N. *The History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy*, Book III, Chapter 3.

²⁷² Horkheimer, M. 'A New Concept of Ideology?', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.325.

²⁷³ Machiavelli, N. *The Prince*, p.13.

extreme instances, some citizens preferred servitude to freedom²⁷⁴ and therefore served in the military. In addition to the prince's requirements, the nobility as a class, wanted to command and oppress the ordinary people²⁷⁵ in their attempts to remain firmly in control of all the means of production – including labour. Machiavelli made the same point in *Discourses*. He wrote: 'if we examine the aims which the nobles and the commons respectively set before them, we shall find in the former a great desire to dominate, in the latter merely a desire not to be dominated'.²⁷⁶ This could hardly have been the position of post-war German workers.

In discussing the relationship between materialism and morality, Horkheimer made the comment that 'Binding moral laws do not exist'.²⁷⁷ Because individuals were primarily focused on their own interests, they, in so doing, effected 'through [their] labor both the welfare and the misery of others – and it can never become entirely evident to what extent and for which individuals his labor means the one or the other'.²⁷⁸ Therefore, in the bourgeois period, no clear separation could be made between one's labour and larger social considerations. The result was, and the only way how this contradiction could have been resolved, was through the rational 'systematic incorporation of each member into a consciously directed labor process'.²⁷⁹ But, argued Horkheimer, in the bourgeois period the labourer suffered from a false consciousness since his own self-consciousness of himself as an independent being, remained obscure. This obscurity stemmed from his labour that contributed to the workings of the whole society. But in turn, he was influenced by this very influence on society, by society.²⁸⁰ Horkheimer did, although in a different context, made the point in a letter to Riekhher that 'life is work'.²⁸¹ For Horkheimer, this went wrong in the materialist dogmatic concept of reality.²⁸²

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p.31.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p.32.

²⁷⁶ See for instance Machiavelli, N. *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, Book I, Chapter 5.

²⁷⁷ Horkheimer, M. 'Materialism and Morality', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science*.

Selected Early Writings, p.33.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p.20.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Horkheimer, M. *A Life in Letters. Selected Correspondence*. (Edited, translated, and with an Introduction by Jacobson, M.R. and E.M. Jacobson), p.14.

²⁸² Horkheimer, M. 'The Rationalism Debate in Contemporary Philosophy', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.223.

He admitted that dialectical materialism had an abstract side – it attempted to transcend the one-sidedness of analytic thought in its efforts to expose this irrationalism.²⁸³ Our consciousness of our own conditionedness takes cognisance of the historically social developed conditions that determines humans as members of a class. Despite their own individual personality, workers' consciousness is also socially determined. Our human personal fate then (as individuals and that of the workers), is closely linked to being transformed into participation in a particular social struggle.²⁸⁴ This class struggle, for the workers, was based on a false consciousness if they believed in the things that middle-class people or capitalists did, since such workers' class belief was counter-productive for their interests.

The rise of rationalism since Descartes developed into a main feature of modern philosophy. But by 1900 modern society was characterised by the rise and pitfalls of its own irrationalism. This situation was based largely on the reliance of monopolistic bourgeois capital at the expense of the working class. Bourgeois capital was incapable to eliminate human suffering²⁸⁵ – it perpetuates such. In other words, the efforts by progressive social groups to bring about a more rational society, has today been brought to a halt. In later writings, Horkheimer described this in full as the eclipse of human reason.²⁸⁶ His argument was a brief summary of the resistance to domination.

In order to escape (or be emancipated), wrote Horkheimer, from oppressive labour and poverty,²⁸⁷ would have meant the re-evaluation of the present crises and prevailing historical conditions that determined the fate of the working class in capitalist society. Present thought and actions functioned primarily as products of a given circumstance. In other words, human reactive behaviour was dependent on the historical conditions that determined our current social circumstances. Accordingly, the rise of modern philosophical anthropology stemmed from the need to spell out new, unqualified principles that provided a rationale for action. This thinking differed from strict economic determinist orthodoxy of Marx's dialectical materialism. For Horkheimer, the goal of human struggle was to bring social life into conformity with the needs of all in society. In wanting to do so, the individual needs to change his organisation of labour in

²⁸³ Ibid., p.244.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.244-245.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.217-221.

²⁸⁶ See for instance Horkheimer, M. *Eclipse of Reason*.

²⁸⁷ Horkheimer, M. 'Remarks on Philosophical Anthropology', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.151.

accordance with the needs of the greater collective good – only therein was the true meaning of labour.²⁸⁸ Only in *doing* so, could we reach happiness and rid oneself from all forms of domination and fear. Such state represented a ‘higher form of society and a brighter existence for all human beings’.²⁸⁹ In other words, our false-consciousness did not see (or recognize) the sorry state of the present historical situation. Our false-consciousness mistakenly thought that objective reality was identical with man’s thoughts.²⁹⁰ But instead, the true process of cognition included real historical *will* and *action* just as much as *learning* and intellectual *comprehension* – the one process could not progress without the other.²⁹¹ In a world where the bourgeoisie victory²⁹² resulted in severe social domination, e.g. as experienced in the darkest of workplaces²⁹³ for many, man was internally enslaved²⁹⁴ – he had no pleasure; was submissive, and was at variance with the enlightened ideals of a ‘higher’ existence. It was within this framework of Critical Theory that authoritarian fascist rule and its centralization of capital, did not bode well for the material fate of the workers.²⁹⁵

Horkheimer described the 20th century as an age of unlimited possibilities – primarily as a result of vast technological development. Similarly, the skills of the workers over the last hundred years developed beyond all expectations.²⁹⁶ So, how does one then explain this contradiction if we consider the miserable state of the working class?

Firstly, one needs to remember that Marx said that the bourgeoisie created a world after its own image. They were the ones responsible for calling into existence the modern working class – the proletarians. The proletarians represented a class of workers ‘who live only so long as they find work’.²⁹⁷ The fact is that the capitalist economy was so irrationally structured that those on

²⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.153-154.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p.158.

²⁹⁰ Horkheimer, M. ‘On the Problem of Truth’, in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, pp.189-192.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p.193.

²⁹² Horkheimer, M. ‘Egoism and Freedom Movements’, in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, pp.55.

²⁹³ Ibid., p.57.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p.58.

²⁹⁵ See for instance Horkheimer, M. ‘Montaigne and the Function of Skepticism’, in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, p.58.

²⁹⁶ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.19.

²⁹⁷ Marx, K. and F. Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*, pp.224, 226-227.

top of society, together with their exploitive activities, can seemingly benefit the worker without becoming unprofitable themselves²⁹⁸ in the process. But how was this possible? Under a different heading 'Time is Money', Horkheimer gave an explanation by looking at the workplace situation. Workers who wasted time on the job, did so at the expense of the employer. Even worse, a general slowdown by workers reduced the employer's profits. When an individual worker was fired from the work place, his contribution to the profit loss was meaningless (negligible) but it did however, gave rise to some philosophical questions. For instance, it was silly to waste work time since the worker could be fired for having done so and can then face starvation. The net result was that if you did not work hard, one could face death. Furthermore, how much money was a certain individual's time span worth? Surely a minute in the life of a worker carried a far less monetary value in comparison to that of e.g. a mid-level administrator. Therefore, how many lives of a worker made up the value of e.g. a well-off banker's work day? 'What is the value of the lifetime of most people?'²⁹⁹ Horkheimer asked. Horkheimer raised the same question when he wrote: 'Consider whether the death of a millionaire is the same as that of a proletarian'.³⁰⁰ Without money and or financial security, then, Horkheimer wrote, one remained dependent on the most of vicious people.³⁰¹ For the workers this meant being at the mercy of the exploitive bourgeoisie. Later, under the heading 'The Value of the Human Being', Horkheimer argued that the value of humans was not given by individuals, but by society. It was the individual that apportioned value to things. Therefore what someone was worth was 'determined through the anonymous machinery of society'.³⁰² Against this background, Horkheimer wrote sarcastically that bourgeoisie morality worked well - meaning, only for them. Dialectically, he stated that 'in today's reality, the ideal merely serves as ideological camouflage for a bad materialistic practice'.³⁰³ To substantiate this one can refer to at least two examples. Firstly, it was acceptable for bourgeoisie morality to allow bourgeoisie privileges, but the moment a proletarian leader received monetary compensation in small terms for e.g. his writings, he/she was castigated.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁸ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.21.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.21-23.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.35.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.43.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p.70.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.35.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.54.

A further explanation by Horkheimer centred on the nature of capitalism. 'The capitalist system' Horkheimer wrote, 'in its present phase is organized exploitation on a world-wide scale. Its preservation creates boundless suffering.'³⁰⁵ The capitalist system was therefore considered an outdated social order despite the technically possible better life that it could offer. Consider for instance that the fate of the English textile workers was only marginally better, because they had to provide product for the Indian textile market. Similarly 'science serves the interests of today's armaments industry'.³⁰⁶ But the conditions of the worker were not really better since 'The structure of capitalist society forever transformed itself while the basis of that society, economic relationships, were left untouched, so the cultural superstructure also constantly changed, yet certain principal elements persisted without significant modification.'³⁰⁷ Parenthetically viewed, one can argue that Horkheimer thus explained that the worker was really the prisoner of the situation. He described it as follows: 'There is no possible way of getting to know a penitentiary unless one is really locked up in it.'³⁰⁸ In our view, this aptly described the position of the workers. Their longing for freedom to rid themselves from their wretched position required that 'a latent interest is needed',³⁰⁹ or their lives 'will be a life of starvation'.³¹⁰ In fact, as seen above, the workers were locked in between military conscription and/or having to go and work in war factories, where, their conditions were arguably not much better. Why then, could the German workers as a class, not improve their lot meaningfully?

6. 'The Impotence of the German Working Class'

Abromeit described Horkheimer's aphorism, 'The Impotence of the German Working Class', in *Dämmerung* (probably written during 1927 and 1928), as one of his finest.³¹¹ Bonß wrote about the 'practical crisis, that is, the stagnation of the workers' movement [...] in terms of the developmental dynamic of capitalism, which had destroyed the unity of the proletariat'.³¹² It is against this

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p.28.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p.29.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p.27.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p.31.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p.28.

³¹⁰ Ibid., p.31.

³¹¹ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, p.178

³¹² Bonß, W. 'The Program of Interdisciplinary Research and the beginnings of Critical Theory', in Benhabib, S.,

W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.108.

background that it would be wise to pay closer attention to the characteristics of the working class.

Firstly, the proletariat, according to Horkheimer, was made up of different layers (or strata). He distinguished between those who work and those who do not work. The employed workers were either regularly employed or sporadically employed, and they were either skilled or unskilled. Despite those differences, there were two generic characteristics in the working class that represented grounds for their unity: firstly, the elimination of the oppressive, exploitive rules of capital, and secondly, their common commitment in their struggle. The multiple layers of the working class consisted of: those who were regularly employed; the respectably employed; the rewardingly employed; and lastly, the temporary employed. At the very bottom was the *lumpenproletariat* or 'reserve army' of workers..³¹³ Furthermore, the relationship between the different strata was not constant. The relative changes (or migration) between the strata of the working class were the result of 'a tendency in the capitalist economic process for the number of workers decreased as more machinery were introduced'³¹⁴ to the workplace. In total an 'increasingly smaller percentage of the proletariat was in fact employed'.³¹⁵

Horkheimer's hypothesis was therefore:

An increase in machinery = the net reduction of the employed.

The nature of the changes in the relationships can be summarized as follows: as there was more work for certain layers of the working class to perform, the more there was a gap (or distance) between those fortunate ones and the less fortunate or unemployed. The life (material) conditions and consciousness of the former were as a result different to that of the unemployed. Because of their diminished position, the proletariat's solidarity with the employed section became less. Furthermore, the criminal element in the *lumpenproletariat* was an insignificant segment of the proletariat as a whole. In the meantime, there was a steady migration from an employed to an unemployed circumstance through no choice. Certain factors inhibited the ability to be employed. These prohibitive factors were e.g. lack of skills; ill health, and age. Despite these

³¹³ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.61.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

limiting factors, but stemming from the fate of the members of the working class, their unity as a common denominator in their opposition to capital and 'common commitment to this struggle',³¹⁶ overcame dividing structural layers. We can therefore conclude that the first feature of the workers' impotence refers to their diminishing numbers and the consequences thereof for the revolutionary movement as a whole. Gradually Horkheimer lost confidence in the workers to bring about revolutionary change. Later, by the mid-1940s, 'Horkheimer and Adorno assumed that the proletariat had been completely assimilated into the workings of capital and they saw little prospect of resistance.'³¹⁷ This incorporation did not necessarily lead to an improved material life or improved access to political space.

The second feature of their impotence refers (in our view) to Horkheimer's analysis for their fear of the loss of their already meagre material goods.³¹⁸ The material gains by the employed were clearly more than what the unemployed possessed and hence the relative importance of their fear of loss. For the employed, the little job security and union membership security that they might have had, could all be squandered if their radical and unsure political actions were to backfire on them. The unemployed on the other hand, had nothing to lose. Judged on material grounds only, there was therefore a vast gap between the working class and the most wretched in society – the *lumpenproletariat*. But this must not give the impression that the employed sections of the working class were well-off. In fact it is not the case and is relative. Consequently, one cannot argue that work and misery were two separate experiences and as if they were mutually exclusive. They are not, since the misery of the employed formed the basis for the continued wretched material conditions of the unemployed in capitalist society. This distinction made the employed workers non-typical of those who needed change to the economic foundations of society, simply because they were marginally better off than the unemployed. Instead, it was the lower strata of the proletariat who were in misery and were restless. There was in dire need for change. This stratum of the proletariat was directly interested in revolution. The problem was that they lacked the capacities for revolutionary education and organisation. They lacked a class consciousness and depended on the higher levels within the working class. The

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Schmidt, J. 'Language, Mythology, and Enlightenment: Historical Notes on Horkheimer and Adorno's

"*Dialectic of Enlightenment*", in *Social Research*, Vol.65, No.4, p.7

³¹⁸ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, pp.61-62.

result was that they were directionless. To compound the situation, younger people who have never worked, had faith in the coming revolution, but no understanding of the theory of revolutionary process.³¹⁹ Such then, made up the characteristics of the second reason regarding the impotence of the workers.

There was a third set of characteristics that alluded to the impotence of the workers. Horkheimer argued that these characteristics were embedded in the capitalist productive process that had been in existence since the origins of capitalism.³²⁰ Horkheimer first dealt with the regularly employed. He argued that even today, the proletarians would have all been better off in a socialist order. However, in practice this was questionable because one negative (down-) side of capitalist production was that it separated interests in socialism, from precisely those human qualities necessary to implement socialism. It was therefore debatable whether the regularly employed were better off in life in comparison to life under socialism. Life under socialism seemed no better because the worker could still simply be dismissed for his/her participation in revolutionary uprisings, or just a strike action. Secondly, for Horkheimer, life for the unemployed was no better than torment. Horkheimer then identified two revolutionary elements: the 'direct interest in socialism' and secondly, 'a clear theoretical consciousness'.³²¹ As a result of the capitalist economic process, these two elements were now widespread amongst all sections of the proletariat. These sections were the 'two workers' parties and the wavering of sizable segments of the unemployed between the Communist and the National-Socialist parties. Both doomed the workers to practical impotence'.³²² The practical impotence that Horkheimer referred to, related to the disunity that existed within the proletariat; the potential ideological rift between them, and the lack of theoretical understanding.

A fourth set of characteristics that related to the static position of the workers, were their own futility.³²³ Horkheimer's argument can be summarized as follows: since the unemployed workers lacked a certain understanding of revolutionary theory, they simply repeated the slogans of the Communist Party. This meant that the vast available literature was undialectically perpetuated, and political practice could not therefore have exploited to its fullest, all positions or options available to them. The result was that political practice

³¹⁹ Ibid., p.62.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid., pp.62-63.

³²³ Ibid., p.63.

degenerated into nonsensical commands and moral reprimands of the straying or defaulting followers, who then simply ignored such. This position was aggravated by their fear for the powerful political apparatus that could lead to a reckless civil war. Under such circumstances they viewed party instructions as meaningless, and it was this meaninglessness that equated to their futile position. As a result, the impotence of the workers was perpetuated. Harman described this as follows: 'The defeats a class suffers can have the effect of bringing on more defeats; people lose faith in their own ability to change things and put their trust in those from other classes who are necessarily going to lead them to more defeats; after the defeat in Germany the most militant workers, desperate for an alternative to Nazism but lacking faith in their own ability to fight successfully'.³²⁴

In the fifth instance, since the 'reformist wing of the workers' movement'³²⁵ did not consciously take sides in the historical struggle, they thought they were above it, and in so doing represented, in our view, a further set of impotence characteristics. In so doing, this position of theirs weakened the ability of the workers' movement even further. The question we pose is: why did reformists not take sides in an issue that seemed to be to their advantage since it appeared paradoxical to be a reformist on the one hand and then not actioned the reforms, on the other? For Horkheimer the answer was in the fact that the reformists no longer understood the theoretical elements of the revolutionary movement. This shortcoming was reflected in the reality that they still incorrectly thought that life under capitalism could be improved upon. Consequently, they turned their backs on their loyalty to the workers' interests. Again, as we have noted above, they feared the potential loss of their work; they repressed their workers' consciousness, and this explained their pro-bourgeoisie actions. Their leaders' positions mirrored that of the most secure in society. Political party leaders rejected Marxism as outdated and were therefore closer to the bourgeoisie than to Marxian theoretical positions.³²⁶ Their actions reduced everything into 'relativism, historicism and sociologism'.³²⁷ In a nutshell: whilst the conditions of the unemployed were 'hell' and that of the working population not much better, they had nevertheless undermined the

³²⁴ Harman, C. *The 20th Century: An Age of Extremes or an Age of Possibilities?* (Autumn 1999.)

<<https://www.marxists.org/archive/harman/1999/xx/20thcentury.htm>>

³²⁵ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.63.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.64.

workers' interests and had therefore become the 'successors of bourgeoisie positivism'.³²⁸ In fact, they associated themselves with the 'bad state of affairs'³²⁹ and had even reduced their rejection of Marxist concepts to strict, so-called respectable democratic philosophy.

We have seen above, how the different strata within the workers' movement, experienced their respective circumstances differently – in some instances there were a fair amount of critical lip-service paid to anti-social democratic forces.³³⁰ On the one hand, fragmentation in the working class, according to Horkheimer³³¹ (or lack of cohesion amongst the workers), was therefore our last set of impotence characteristics. The gradual integration into capitalist production process of the positive capacities of the workers, and well as the inhumane conditions that resulted from capitalist production, were two examples of the present real life experiences of the various social groups. On the other hand, the two elements of the dialectical method, namely factual knowledge and a clarity regarding fundamentals, were also not present – not amongst the political functionaries, and not amongst the left intellectuals right through 'to the theoreticians of the workers' movement'.³³² Instead, according to Horkheimer, the entire spectrum was then loyal to the materialist doctrine. This newfound loyalty bordered on becoming 'a mindless and contentless cult of idealism and personality'³³³ and the only escape from this was through revolution. This new loyalty equated loyalty to those who denounced Marxism. They had no materialist principles left and became ignorant of 'the ideological forces that controlled intellectual life'.³³⁴ Horkheimer then made two distinctions: 'those who recognize existing society as bad, but they lack the knowledge to practically and theoretically prepare the revolution' and 'others might be able to produce that knowledge but lack the fundamental experience

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Petersson, F. 'In Dire Need of a Colonial Agenda? The Mobilization and Responses of the Labour Socialist

International on the Emergence of the League against Imperialism.' (Paper presented on 23 Feb 2013 at

the 'Crisis and Mobilization after 1789.') Organized by the HOSAC, Amsterdam, 22-24 Feb 2013.

<www.academia.edu/4284979/In_Dire_Need_of_a_Colonial_Agenda_The_Mobilization_and_Responses_of_the_Labour-Socialist_International_on_the_Emergence_of_the->, p.4.

³³¹ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.64.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid., pp.64-65.

of the urgent need for change'.³³⁵ Similarly, he continued, the socialists fought amongst themselves but respected truth and objectivity; the communists, on the other hand 'don't advance reasons but refer to authority'³³⁶ and reverted to force. Goodwill alone, could not overcome the fragmentation of the working class. As a result, the economic process continued to perpetuate itself.

Taken together, the characteristics of the impotence of the German working class can thus be summarized as follows:

1	Diminishing worker numbers, and the consequences thereof for the revolutionary movement.
2	The fear of workers for the loss of their material goods.
3	Characteristics embedded in the capitalist productive process since the origins of capitalism.
4	The futility of the workers themselves.
5	The 'reformist wings of the workers' that did not take sides in the historical struggle.
6	The fragmented nature of the workers.

Horkheimer summarized, in our view, a way out of this stalemate, as follows: 'In both parties there exist some of the forces on which the future of mankind depends.'³³⁷ This conceptual unity was based on the conviction that a 'direct interest in socialism' and 'a clear theoretical consciousness'³³⁸ was needed to overcome the above six sets of impotence characteristics within the workers' movement, as described above. It is, in other words, Horkheimer's concept of *praxis*³³⁹ that will explain the solution. Any such analysis will have to take note of the fact that a history 'of classical workers' movement is a history of continuities and radical discontinuities'³⁴⁰ and the relative influence of the uneven process of repression during the failed German Revolution and thereafter. Below, we will see that Horkheimer's thinking about the German workers formed the building blocks used to outline the sociological-

³³⁵ Ibid., p.65.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid., p.62.

³³⁹ Horkheimer's concept of *praxis* is studied elsewhere.

³⁴⁰ Goldner, L. 'A Short History of the Working-class Movement from Lassalle to Neoliberalism: The Distorting

Hegemony of the Unproductive Middle Classes.' <lib.com.org/library/short-history-world-working-class-movement-lassalle-neoliberalism-distorting-hegemony-un>

philosophical imperatives of Horkheimer's advancement of social philosophy at the Institute from early 1931 onwards.

7. Final notes on 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research'

Horkheimer's treatment of the workers was, firstly, based on the fact that 'traditional disciplinary boundaries had been called into question'.³⁴¹ This view of his was in line with the conviction that all disciplines needed to be pursued in a multi-disciplinary relationship. They all needed to be tapped to arrive at the 'truth' – the ultimate driving force for the Institute. Elements of these featured prominently in his later formulation/s of Critical Theory.

The basis for this was not far removed from the empirical study of the attitudes of the German workers which Horkheimer and Erich Fromm conceptualised between 1928 and 1929. Horkheimer played a significant role in the foundation of the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute, established in February 1929. The later Institute which Horkheimer would head up was well positioned to draw on the influences of the Psychoanalytic Institute.

At the centre of the research at the Institute of Social Research was the ambition to determine if the workers would stand by their political convictions should they face a possible seizure of power by the National Socialists, because, Abromeit wrote, the German working class and its leaders of the Social Democratic Party were at best 'reluctant revolutionaries'.³⁴²

³⁴¹ Horkheimer, M. 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social

Research', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*. (Translated

by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. 'Introduction' by G.F. Hunter), p.1.

³⁴² Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, p.212.

Therefore an important sphere for future study thus included the human fate of the workers which Horkheimer referred to in his inaugural lecture. Despite the fact that Horkheimer often wrote about the lot of the individual in society, his approach of treating human fate (thus the workers) and 'the entire material and intellectual culture of humanity'³⁴³ as 'members of a community'³⁴⁴ was simply because the individual and the group (workers) functioned together in the realm of social life. This then, was one of the reasons why he wanted to establish *social* philosophy as a focused discipline. This was necessary because it was, according to him, not possible to understand 'the essence and organization of culture 'solely on the basis of the dynamics of the individual'.³⁴⁵ As a result one can argue that the truth behind the conditions of the workers was only possible in the context of '*social* totality.'³⁴⁶ This equated to the life of the collective whole. What needed to be accomplished could only happen through the active interest of those to who it mattered. In this regards we saw earlier (above) how Horkheimer dealt with the question of workers' relative inertia.

It was true for Horkheimer that reason did not always serve conflicting interests best.³⁴⁷ He argued previously how the educated and political powerful wilfully contrived truth and their interests at the expense of the workers. Therefore an aura of arbitrariness surrounded their efforts to satisfy the self-interest of the bourgeois. Consequently the have-nots were marginalised into the grouping of the 'Other'. The dialectical contradiction was that 'they cannot attain the whole'³⁴⁸ and therefore there was no universal behaviour. This was evident in the behaviour of the workers before, during and after the 1918/19 revolutions in German society. This does not mean that the workers had no lasting effect in and on German society. Their interests were in opposition to the fact that the state was 'directly conditioned by the conflict of social interests'.³⁴⁹

³⁴³ Horkheimer, M. 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social

Research', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*. (Translated by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. 'Introduction' by G.F. Hunter), p.1.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p.2.

³⁴⁶ Ibid. (Italics added.)

³⁴⁷ See Horkheimer, M. *Eclipse of Reason*.

³⁴⁸ Horkheimer, M. 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social

Research', in Horkheimer, M. *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*. (Translated

by G.F. Hunter, M.S. Kramer, and J. Torpey. 'Introduction' by G.F. Hunter), p.3.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p.4.

In a philosophical sense, the way out, for Horkheimer, was through social philosophy – it transcended the state and took note of human interests be they in the form of securing the position of the individual or that of the workers. In other words, it attended to the ‘vicissitudes of human fate’, one that went further than only the individual striving for happiness, but in addition, accounted for ‘another consciousness’. Such consciousness we saw earlier, was to a large extent lacking amongst the German workers towards the end and immediately following the war. We concluded above that the German working class were deeply divided to the detriment of their collective self-consciousness.

The conviction that ‘social philosophy may well performed social functions’³⁵⁰ comes as no surprise. After all, the Institute was well into researching the position of the German working class before the end of January 1931. This is a clear example of investigating ‘concrete ways in which human beings life [work] together’³⁵¹ and how to keep research ‘in constant connection to real life.’³⁵² In particular, Horkheimer wanted ‘to apply them [social-philosophical research methods] to a particularly significant and salient social group, namely to the skilled craftspeople and white collar workers in Germany, and then subsequently to the same strata in the other highly developed European countries’.³⁵³

8. Conclusion

The essence of the conflict between bourgeois and proletariat can be reduced to the following: capital centres on profit, whilst the proletariat is concerned with the liberation of mankind.³⁵⁴ The fact is that the liberation of people is not limited to the proletariat. This was discussed above and it suggests Horkheimer’s position about the workers: it reflects a ‘massive internal crisis of

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p.8.

³⁵¹ Ibid., p.10.

³⁵² Ibid., p.13.

³⁵³ Ibid., pp.12-13.

³⁵⁴ Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.69.

capitalism'.³⁵⁵ This crisis goes further than a mere orthodox interpretation of Marx based on economic considerations. It also refers to the crises of capitalism of today that have not been resolved but are expressed in neo-ethical terms.

After all, as a result of the failure of socialism, it was Felix Weil who, 'inspired by the workers' movement [...] wanted an institute which could deal directly with the problems of Marxism'.³⁵⁶ Horkheimer's views of the German working class is important because the 'problematic which sparked a critical theory of the modern form was the demise of the working class as an organ of appropriate revolutionary knowledge and action coupled with the rise of fascism and the emergence of Stalinization'.³⁵⁷ The lack of real political achievements by the workers in immediate post-war Germany did nothing to improve their material conditions.

Not only did the first empirical investigation of the Institute into the German workers in 1929 demonstrated that unconscious character structures played an important role in the reproduction of society as a whole³⁵⁸ but also that the lower classes had proven to be passive and wasted an opportunity to bring about a real emancipatory revolution.³⁵⁹ This presumes that Horkheimer did not expect it in his early life until he experienced it first-hand at about 1918/19. On the one hand, workers close to the lower middle class were anxious not to fall into a spiral of downward mobile pressures that might have forced them into the lower ranks of the working class.³⁶⁰ Above the middle class workers were the comfortable and rich whose nationalism was essentially conservative. Below the middle class were the unionized workers with their internationalist allegiances to class rather than race.³⁶¹

Horkheimer at least wanted people to have the freedom to express them freely - even 'if someone harboured revolutionary ideas, he must at least express them'.³⁶² By the end of the 20th and into the 21st century, debates in the public domain around emancipatory communicative action (read e.g. Habermas)

³⁵⁵ Bonß, W. 'The Program of Interdisciplinary Research and the beginnings of Critical Theory', in Benhabib, S.,

W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds.) *On Max Horkheimer. New Perspectives*, p.108.

³⁵⁶ Rasmussen D.M. 'Critical Theory and Philosophy', in Rasmussen, D.M. (ed.) *The Handbook of Critical Theory*, p.16.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., p.17.

³⁵⁸ Abromeit, J. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*, p.225.

³⁵⁹ Willette, J.S.M. "The German Workers Under the Weimar Republic."

<www.arthistoryunstuff.com/tag/the-german-workers-under-the-weimar-republic/>

³⁶⁰ Whittock, M. *A Brief History of the Third Reich. The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*, p.3.

³⁶¹ Ibid., p.4.

³⁶² Horkheimer, M. *Dawn & Decline*, p.69.

still place enlightenment ideals high on the agenda of Critical Theory. But workers were not able to do so freely. They were looked down upon by the higher classes of society, and looked at by the state organs. As a result Horkheimer's writings often reflected his dissatisfaction with the lack of various forms of freedom and how criticism thereof led, for instance, to personal danger.³⁶³ The brutal treatment of the workers by the *interfering agencies* of the state is one example. The *key methods* of domination at the hands of a brutally modernist and technologically advanced state³⁶⁴ are the flip sides of the same coin. In this regards, Föllmer proposed new approaches to traditional conceptions such as the Weimar crisis period vs multiple modernities.³⁶⁵ The Weimar society exposed a whole range of government interferences³⁶⁶ – even the relationship between the depression and the strengthening of Germany's position in international relations.³⁶⁷ In essence, the same can be argued for the part played by nationalism in rallying the masses of middle and upper social classes thereby extending governmental spheres of influence to the workers – be it in exploitive terms. As a result, socialism is unable to prevent the bourgeoisie superstructure's absorbing of the working class movements. Material wealth (read exploited material accumulation), we have seen above, is the prerequisite of power, independence, gratification and the reason the giant machinery for the preservation of injustice and misery, extended into colonial horrors and functionaries of e.g. penitentiaries. Today, the intricacies of the pre-independence colonies are under severe intellectual scrutiny as the rise of globalization necessitated a re-look at traditional wisdoms.

Horkheimer wrote that it 'is the little people that swallow the dust of the automobiles that replaced the mail coach; the old craftsman perishes miserably, and the gradual ruin of unprofitable enterprises is a hell in the midst of the

³⁶³ Ibid., p.24.

³⁶⁴ Whittock, M. *A Brief History of the Third Reich. The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*, p.1.

³⁶⁵ Föllmer, M. 'Which Crisis? Which Modernity? New Perspectives on Weimar Germany', in Hung, J., G.

Weiss-Sussex, P. Wilkes (eds.) *Beyond Glitter and Doom. The Contingency of the Weimar Republic*, p.27.

³⁶⁶ Föllmer, M. 'Review' of McElligott, A. (ed.) *Short Oxford History of Germany: Weimar Germany*.

<www.academia.edu/3391574/Short_Oxford_History_of_Weimar_Germany> See also Föllmer, M. 'The Problem of National Solidarity in Interwar Germany.' <www.academia.edu/2198864/The-Problem-of-National-Solidarity-in-Interwar-Germany/> 26 November 2012.

³⁶⁷ Myerson, R.B. 'Political Economics and the Weimar Disaster.' <www.researchgate.net/.../publicastions/5174284>

modern economic process'.³⁶⁸ The working class lived in backwardness and misery 'which technical progress brings and which gives rise to their false theories is no less real than the happiness of future generations which that progress may perhaps produce some day.'³⁶⁹ The workers lived as paupers – Marx and Engels made that point long ago at the end of the opening chapter in their *Manifesto*.³⁷⁰ Their poor living conditions were common experiences 'resulting in a common confusion'³⁷¹ wrote Kafka. Such were the prevailing conditions during and after the war – conditions that serve as background for Horkheimer's intellectual development and the beginnings that would eventually give rise to Critical Theory.

Today, new debates are emerging relating to work. Some are moving away from original Marxian views that labour is the central category of social emancipation. Axel Honneth for instance, raised questions about the normative significance of the individual's work activities. Some issues at stake are: the benefits of individual worker autonomy; how the worker can remain autonomous, and works structures that ensure worker recognition.³⁷² These appear to be the same issues that Horkheimer dealt with at the time. These questions take the contradictions of 'positive freedom', whilst the individual is still recruited into the working class conditions,³⁷³ to a next level. Finally, the conditions of the German working class is reflecting a metropole's broken promise regarding a better life also at the periphery.³⁷⁴

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³⁶⁹ Ibid., p.110.

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³⁷¹ Kafka, F. *The Complete Stories*. (Edited by N.M. Glatzer. Foreword by J. Updike), p.429.

³⁷² Moll, K.N. 'The enduring Significance of Axel Honneth's Critical Conception of Work', in *Emergent*

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³⁷³ Jay, M. *The Dialectical Imagination. A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950*. p.59.

³⁷⁴ Goebel, M. 'Fighting and Working in the Metropole. The Nationalizing Effects of the First World War

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